

The Complete Legacy Of The

Ninja: The Untold Story

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Disclaimer:

The Ninjitsu techniques, skills and exploits detailed in this book are entirely for historical record. The authors and publisher point out the potential risks and dangers in the practice of all martial art forms and associated activities. It is recommended that the studying of any martial art form be pursued only with expert advice and under legitimately qualified instruction and supervision.

Ninjitsu, is a unique system of combat and spying, created by the elite warriors of a secret society of feudal Japan. Over the span of several centuries, the system and this society's culture evolved into 1700 different factions, each, with its own specific precepts and name.

Each faction is composed of several different groups and their sub-groups. A sub-group, consists of several compartmentalized cells. Each of these cells have their own separate (Ryu) name. Therefore, all of these distinct factions with their different names, groups, sub-groups and their cells, out of necessity, are being collectively referred to by their ancient rooted nick-name –

'Ninja'

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, the figure whose activities have given rise to the ninja myth was an undercover agent functioning as a spy (sekko), gathering intelligence, and espionage (kancho). What is now termed Ninjitsu was originally called Shinobi-No-Jutsu. Shinobi is the alternate reading of the 'nin' character in ancient texts. Shinobi-No-Mono was the word used in texts from the Sengoku Period that described what is now termed 'Ninja'. The words 'Ninja' and 'Ninjitsu' would not appear in texts for several generations.

Other words used to describe ninja in old accounts were 'Kagimono-Hiki', literally meaning sniffing and hearing, from the Koyo Gunkan Chronicles and 'Kusa' (grass), in the Hojo Godai-Ki. This 'Kusa' was probably used because of all the time spies spent

lying in the grass near the enemy's camps. The terms 'Teisatsu' (scout), 'Kishu' (surprise attack), and 'Koran' (agitators), were used in the Sengoku Period.

No matter what its practitioners were called, Ninjitsu was considered underhanded by the Daimyo who employed them. The ninja were so thoroughly despised by the aristocrats that most references of undercover operations, fundamental to the conduct of war in any culture, were purposely left out of early Gunkimono (war tales), Kogan Monogatari and Heike Monogatari. The only exception being the straight forward use of scouts.

The common soldier, who outnumbered the elite samurai, are almost completely ignored in the early Gunkimonos. This is not surprising because these classics were written for the aristocrats who wanted to hear only about the honorable and glorious deeds of their ancestors.

The earliest known written account of an undercover operation by shinobi is in the war tale 'Taiheiki'. Written by Sasama, it recounts the shinobi assassination of Homma Saburo, not carried out by a black-clad assassin but by a twelve year old boy.

Many ninja in this time period were considered expert and somewhat respectable as they passed down their secret traditions only to their descendants. Others were no more than bandits hired as temporary kancho, mistrusted by their own allies.

It is from both the factual accounts and the fascinating myths, perpetuated by the ninja themselves, that the legend grows. Leading to the remarkable tradition of the superhuman figure of today. From the ancient media of the theatre to the modern media of film. The ninja has been cast as a considerably larger than life super being.

The history of ninjitsu is over three centuries old and encompasses exploits of guerrilla warfare, espionage, assassination and mysticism, with legends granting magical

and superhuman powers that lift the ninja above ordinary human accomplishments. In this book the authors are bringing the legacy of this shadow warrior out of its secret recesses and will show that the truth is as fascinating as the fiction. This book contains the oral history of ninjitsu as it was imparted to Hanchi Dux by his teacher (sensei), as has been the tradition for generations. This oral history has been transcribed and interjected with known historical accounts. Where possible the fantasy (embellishment) of events has been corrected with historical research. Many fictional accounts of the ninja have a foundation in truth, and many historical events have an unrecorded connection to this secret society. Much of what has been written about ninjitsu has been based on the interpretations of ancient scrolls written in code. Most of these interpretations have been carried out by western authorities who have no actual teachings in this secret martial art form, applying their own standards in these interpretations.

In this book, for the first time, is an account of the history of the ninja as recounted by a legitimate ninjitsu practitioner. A history without the mysticism, magic or religious connotations of previous works. A history as fact based as possible when dealing writing about a society whose sole existence and survival has been based on secrecy.

(Full page pen & ink drawing of Ninja)

WHAT IS A NINJA?

To answer the question, "*What is a Ninja?*", it would probably be a good idea to begin by erasing some of the negative notions that already exist about this mystical warrior. However, to merely say that a Ninja, is ***not*** an assassin, a terrorist, nor an evil character relegated to mythical history, says too little regarding the rich tapestry that is woven into the condition.

To define a thing by telling what it is not, only creates an *illusion* of understanding, much like focusing on someone's shadow to try and picture their appearance. This book is dedicated to adding light to the shadow of the myth, to give the reader a realistic vision of what is a Ninja.

To begin then, one must understand that to be Ninja is not merely to know the meaning of a few words. Words, as Ninja training emphasizes, are easily bent to the meaning of any time, place or narrow purpose. Prior to Hollywood's entertainment marketing machine, martial arts magazines and toy manufacturers, (all primarily responsible for creating the Ninja craze of the eighties), in Japan, where the art of the Ninja was born, the word "*Ninja*" was either feared or revered, and daringly spoken of in public. Even today, in the secret halls of the Japanese Secret Service and in the presence of Yakuza (Japanese Organized Crime), it's understood that the secret society of the infamous Ninja continues, but only according to its ancient philosophical teaching that defines itself "*by the doing and not by a single name.*"

Those privileged few know that, contrary to the movies and comic strips, the Ninja is not a remnant icon of a dead culture relegated to the distant past, merely, the black hooded advertised practitioners of a martial arts style, exploited in magazines and through mail order houses. Not unlike the centuries old, La Cosa Nostra, dubbed the Mafia, this sub-culture is transformed in name from Ninja to Shinobi, Suppa, Rappa, Genyosha,

Kokuryukai, Kempei Tai, Yamaguchi-gumi... To name but a few examples of the several of hundreds of the different names linked to its ancient factions; each faction, with its name adopted then changed and changed again, in order to continue to be true to its often violent and covert precepts, augmenting their personal and social struggle for power through anonymity.

Traditionally, the various styles of Ninjitsu (specific methods of becoming Ninja) epitomize the very best training and technology of all the martial arts, but are not closely related to any one art. Ninjitsu, by some practitioners, is not thought of as a martial art but as a, “*martial science*.”

In Japan, it was the first eclectic combat system to abandon the practice of training through the regimented tradition of copying the master. It recognized that every martial style and individual share their own distinct strong and weak points. The practice of the martial science of Ninjitsu, is for each practitioner to discern the weaknesses of each style and adopt only the strengths, without regard to outdated rules and regulations or traditions. No two Ninja would fight predictably alike, unlike, typical Samurai.

From a historical perspective, being good in martial abilities, alone, does not make one Ninja. Becoming Ninja was to adopting a total way of life, whereby, some ancient Ninja clans were bound by strict moral and ethical codes in contrast to other Ninja clans and their alliances, where the ends always justified the means. Murder, extortion, rape, fraud and a total disregard for even a Ninja spouse's or their own child's welfare [if the two were deemed “outsiders” to the society] being totally acceptable and taught behavior. Being ruthless was not a sin but a cult commandment for all clan members and their many associates. It was the broad scope of circumstances and varying conditions by which to act ruthless, that separated the factions from each other.

The common goals of Ninjitsu training for all of its clans was the attainment of ferocity through efficiency. This was attained on three levels: spiritual, mental and physical. However, acceptance of the precepts of Ninjitsu was *not always* the same as adopting a religion. To make this distinction completely clear, one must first dissect the requirements of becoming Ninja and examine its main parts separately, and how they relate to the whole. When this explanation is completed, only then can one be able to appreciate and insightfully understand the historical significance of the Ninja legacy.

(pen & ink of Ghost Mask)

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

One of the greatest misconceptions about the Ninja is that they receive no spiritual training. The reason that this picture is painted, regarding Ninja indoctrination, is probably due to the unusual character of the spiritual beliefs, themselves.

There are, two basic philosophical guiding principles originating in the two major Ninjitsu styles, the (Northern Japan) Koga-Ninja Alliance and the (Southern Japan) Iga-Ninja. The first, and major, overriding belief is that of the Koga-Alliance. This is the oldest and can be misconstrued as the philosophically purest style of the Ninja teachings. The Koga , however, are especially, adaptive and open to change. The Koga's main philosophical concept is that there is a "Source", a higher power. One is merely encouraged to attempt to find a way to be "*one with the Source.*" Some Ninja sects believe there is only one means to do this and remain pure in relationship with the higher power by "*...the doing, not in the name,*" which means, "the journey (way)" is left up to the individual.

Lacking specific dogma in their beliefs has mistakenly led many in the past to considered the Koga-Ninja to be devoid of spirituality, unaware that the absence of any particular dogmatic religious doctrine, left these individuals free to discover his/her own spiritual beliefs through self-actualization, (the most central theme amongst the Koga clans of Ninjitsu). There exists tales of entire Koga-Ninja factions being converted from traditional Japanese Shinto beliefs to devout Catholicism, which if true, may form the basis of a "common ground" explanation as to why it was that the Koga-Ninja factions over their rival's efforts, the Iga, that the Koga were able to obtain a steady supply of guns in Japan, through the Portuguese.

The second most popular belief in the various Ninja styles is derived from Shingen Buddhism (Buddhism, according to Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, teaches that right living, right thinking, and self-denial will enable the soul to reach Nirvana, a

divine state of release from earthly and bodily pain, sorrow and desire.) Many of the Iga-Ninja teachings follow this sect closely. They adopted the Buddhist beliefs in the late 16th century after a prior cultural split took place between them and other Ninja clans. The hypothesis being that the Iga were isolated, and so adopted Buddhist ideas and teachings as a form of protection.

All traditional Ninja training (either Koga or Iga) begins at infancy. In some respects, the training actually starts after an expectant mother is certain that she is pregnant. She doesn't wait for delivery to begin the schooling of her child. She begins by speaking to the fetus. The belief that the undeveloped fetus can learn is so strong that, in the traditional Ninja household, birthdays are not celebrated on the anniversary of delivery, but on a date determined to be exactly six months prior to the birth.

On the day of delivery the child is washed off and held, by their father or future mentor, in a meticulous fashion, as part of a familial and cultural bonding ritual. Male Koga children, according to legend, were as infants circumcised, which may help prove that this custom links them back (at least in part) to their non-Asiatic origins. Some Judaic-Christian theologians argue this practice gave rise to myths that Ninjitsu's origins are derived from the lost biblical "*Book of War*" of the Israelites. This secret book, according to ancient accounts, had been entrusted to those Israelites escaping to the east during the destruction of the Temple and coincides with the sudden emergence of unusually effective new tactics employed in Asian military warfare, later, taken to Japan and coined Ninjitsu. The theory further supported by the little known fact that China, until the rise of communism in the 1930's, possessed a Chinese-Jewish population that dated back centuries.

From the moment of birth to age four, a Ninja child never leaves his parents side.

Here he or she receives constant, positive affection. Later, when the adolescent or adult Ninja (as instruction dictates) implements calculated decisions compromising one's honor, it is felt that they will be better able to do so because they are not lacking in any self esteem by being denied affection at an early age. Their needs in this area, in other words, will already be met. External or peer pressure is not effective.

Throughout the life of a Koga-Ninja, the individual is further guided toward four spiritual/mental goals. These goals are presented as the "four things to perfect in ones life." They are:

1) *Benevolence*, (Ink symbol)

2) *Courage*, (Ink symbol)

3) *Valor*, (Ink symbol)

and 4) *Wisdom*, (Ink symbol)

Beyond being benevolent to those in need or to one's friends, the Koga-Ninja strives for benevolence even with his enemies. In a manner that resembles the Christian ethic of turning the other cheek, Koga-Ninja factions vow to show mercy in battle if mercy is an option. The desired outcome is always to turn enemies into allies.

The perspective on courage also goes beyond the simplest notions of the word. In the Ninja view, to be courageous is to always take on new frontiers and meet new challenges. This is especially true on the social level. For instance, when the Samurai were working toward keeping the status quo with the lower classes suppressed, the Koga-Ninja

fought for establishing social equality.

In terms of valor, the Ninja view comes closest to the textbook meaning of the word. A Ninja is taught, and grows to accept this position without question, that even in the face of overwhelming odds, one meets his most minor of obligations. This includes social obligations not ordinarily considered on an ethical level, such as paying one's bills on time. Another example of Ninja-valor would be feeding elderly or young members of a family before he would consider satisfying his own hunger. This is in stark contrast to the Samurai who, in order to ensure there was enough food for themselves, had made a practice out of killing female children in times of famine or war.

The last of the "four things to perfect" is wisdom. This means that one always tries to act out of logic and not emotion. A Ninja thinks and decides when to act. When he decides, his actions are methodical, cold and without passion. He does not use his skill to accomplish goals of the flesh or those born out of anger.

Within all this there is the belief that wisdom (knowledge) is a tool for obtaining power. A Ninja always acts out of and seeks wisdom. He always shows himself to be a student of life and is never content to keep the status quo. Above this, he strives to know when improvement is impossible and learns, therefore to work within the system at hand.

The attainment of these four goals: *benevolence, courage, valor and wisdom*, is not promoted until formal instruction begins. At childhood, the majority of future Ninja are taught to embrace nine principles. This is the foundation of the spiritual teachings of the many clans of Koga-Ninja. These same principles are attributed to or acknowledged codified first by Japan's greatest swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi, in his "*Go Rin No Sho*" (*A Book of Five Rings*). These spiritual beliefs are based on moral and ethical codes which overlap into the blending of the mental and physical training.

Gorin No Sho, Book of Five Rings, was written by Japan's greatest swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645 AD). Musashi wrote out the Book of Fives Rings, during the last years of his life, as a textbook guide to the secret of success in life. Musashi based its philosophy and methods on his practical experience. It is so detailed that the methods that were realized 300 years ago are just as valuable today.

The first principle is: **"Do Not Think Dishonestly."** Included in this first principle is the admonishing to always be truthful with oneself. A Ninja knows he cannot make excuses for his behavior, because the fruit of his life is translated in terms of cause and effect. To grow, one must be truthful with oneself first, and then with those who surround us. A good translation of this principle can be seen in a person who makes excuses for his smoking rather than giving up what he knows is a bad habit.

The second principle that young Ninja must memorize is: **"The Way Is In The Training."** This ethic is taught to guide one to dedicate himself to the training. It is realized that if you don't put anything into training, then you certainly won't get anything out. On the larger scale it is seen that success in life depends upon experiences. Part of Ninja training says that everyday life is one's training ground. One is taught to look at everything as an exercise in life 🖐 both success and failure. The more one works, the better one will be able to assure success, since one will rely on no one but oneself and those lessons are gained only through experience.

The third principle to be learned epitomizes one of the central differences between Ninjitsu's teachings and other "martial arts." This is, **"Become Acquainted With Every Art."** The concept that is stressed here is that everything has value. This does not mean that a person should try and master everything. However, it is believed that when a student understands a system he will not fear it, nor will he fall prey to its strengths *if* he has also

analyzed its weaknesses.

The fourth concept to be attained is to: **"Know The Ways Of All Professions."** As much as possible (and taking into consideration the qualifications of principle number three) we should strive to relieve ourselves from dependency on professionals who could easily exploit the ignorant. To this end, one is taught to strive to learn basic concepts of law, health or other professions. This is done in an attempt to eliminate one's dependency on those who we usually rely upon. Another aspect of this principle is that, by understanding the work of those who help us we force them to perform much more effectively. The theory being that an educated audience gets the best performance.

"Distinguish Between Gain And Loss in Worldly Matters" is the fifth principle that is memorized at a young age. Every experience to a Ninja can potentially be a learning one. For that reason, it is considered similar to a sin to cry over one's mistakes or misfortunes such as losing a toy, a job or a personal problem. The core of this principle is the belief that our emotions are the things that really count. They are energy, and like all energy, the Ninja strives to channel his forces in the most efficient manner.

The sixth principle is one which seems to transcend logic at first glance. It is: **"Develop Intuitive Judgment."** What the Ninja wants to strive for is a basic understanding of everything. To accomplish this monumental task one must seek enough experiences, at every level of life so that all aspects of life become familiar. At this point, it is believed that a person can rely on this body of past experience to "sense in advance" the outcome of any given moment. An example of this principle in practice is the police officer on the street who is able to rely on his "gut instincts" and arrest a suspect, before his life is put in danger by a hidden weapon. When a Ninja reaches this level of understanding he is able to tell an enemy from a friend, before danger presents itself.

The seventh principle is: "**Perceive The Thing Which Cannot Be Seen.**" Beyond achieving a kind of "sixth sense," the Ninja also strives to remain sensitive to his fellow human being. Much of the training, without this principle of genuine compassion, could lead the Ninja to a feeling of emotional separation from the world. Nothing would be more wrong in Ninja eyes. In other words, "don't become a stone, so cold that you are oblivious to the suffering of others, even their unspoken suffering."

One of the ways to prevent this separation from our fellow humans is dealt with in the eighth principle, "**Pay Attention to Trifles.**" By this it is understood that often more is said with a single gesture or in the flicker of an eye, than with 1000 words.

The last of the nine principles is probably the most difficult to achieve, yet it too is basic in the teachings. It is: "**Do Nothing Which Is Of No Use.**" This concept is one that is stressed in both everyday life and in the physical training of Ninjitsu. From the very beginning a student of Ninjitsu is told to examine his life, the time spent on particular tasks, his goals and accomplishments and without emotion eliminate all that is wasteful. In this light it would appear obvious, as an example, that one should never use drugs recreationally. A person should never numb the body, or waste precious time, without good reason. Relaxation, on the other hand is important, but the time spent in that activity should be well planned.

This leads us to an important perspective that Ninjitsu has on the use of ritual. Most martial arts stress the use of "Kata", set movements, like dance routines, to teach concentration and form. The Ninja are educated to believe rituals (and Kata) may serve a purpose, but when it ceases to develop or enhance form, then it should be abandoned. A good example that one Ninja practitioner gives about useless teachings, points out that certain moves in several Katas' portray the fighting of horses and attacks using a Samurai's

pig-tail as a grip. Unless Samurai dress becomes in vogue or horse-back warfare makes a come-back, stressing these kinds of techniques is seemingly not beneficial, pointless.

One ritual that Ninja do allow and actually recommend is called "***Kuji-kiri***" or "Nine Hands Cutting." This is a series of hand gestures which are combined with certain chanted words. The idea is that this practice will allow the Ninja a moment of respite, a time to re-energize and organize his feelings, while becoming one with the universe. The number nine recurs often in Ninjitsu. The reason for this exemplifies Kuji-kiri's involvement with man's place in the universe (since there are nine planets). The number nine finds importance in Ninjitsu, since many of its different factions are attributed to myths of practicing lost forms of astrology, capable of predicting catastrophes used to defeat their enemies. Kuji-kiri is regarded by some factions as one process of unifying mind and body and grandly portraying the interrelation of man to his environment. It is the idea that everything and everyone in this world, and beyond it, is connected and thereby affected. The majority, however, dismiss its importance and only embrace it merely as secret recognition symbols.

(Pen & Ink drawing of Hand Gestures)

The Kuji-kiri was somewhat altered by the Iga-Ninja after their split with the other clans and their adoption of Buddhist philosophy. These same hand positions were seen by them as a means of selling the idea of training to outsiders. Ninopo Mikkyo's "Kuji Goshin ho" was offered as a new method of protecting oneself from evil. With the Mikkyo alterations, the hand positions were combined with other mudra, mantra and mandalla techniques (gestures, words and graphic depiction of the universe and its laws) in a vow of supernatural power.

Instead of opposing these theories totally as fraud, the Koga quietly sought to show respect for differing opinions. They knew and taught that there is energy in the self and that extraordinary powers could be achieved by diligent efforts. They also taught meditation. However, it was stressed that one should meditate on the important goals in life, such as peace and tranquillity of mind, and not on obtaining super-powers.

Again, for the Koga there was no dogmatism in these spiritual teachings. Everyone, it was understood, was put on earth by "The Source," and are all made different by intention. For in our differences we grow. You cannot make a cake with only one ingredient. You need flour, sugar, eggs and heat. The "Heat" in this figurative recipe can be translated to represent "conflict" in the Ninja teachings. The heat makes the cake rise and conflict makes things happen. Our conflicts are life itself. We should revel in our differences. If the sugar wanted to be the flour, or the eggs tried to become like the sugar, then the recipe (our balance) would be disrupted. "The Source" allows for all creation to see things differently.

Interestingly, the ultimate goals for a few Ninja sects are simple human ones. They strive to have a spouse, raise a family and live in peace. They do not seek wealth or power, but happiness through personal growth.

All agree, that to best achieve the ends one must faithfully adhere to the teachings, devoid of ego, in order to be totally in control, operating at full potential. The Ninja realizes that anger or shame is an ego feeling attacked. A surrendering of spiritual power.

MENTAL TRAINING

One important principle to remember when dealing with the mental aspects of the training of a Ninja is that the spiritual concepts supply the general blueprint for everything that follows. From the beginning the initiate is programmed to remember that ***"The Way Is In The Training."*** Therefore, all of the training that we are now going to discuss is undergone with a seriousness and dedication that is almost the equivalent of religious zeal. A Ninja knows that he **MUST** train that way, otherwise, when his training is needed it will lack the shine that makes the action so perfect that it is almost magical.

One of the first teachings, on the mental level, is that we cannot rely on only one of our senses. In the beginning, the Ninja student is blindfolded and everyday, for at least an hour, he must accomplish tasks that would ordinarily require sight. Such tasks as walking, cooking, tying knots or other work is given to the beginning student until he/she is

completely comfortable with that task while blindfolded.

The idea behind this mental stimulation is that by limiting one sense, the other senses are allowed to blossom to their full potential. Soon, the student is able to feel the presence of another individual by means of body heat, sound or vibration of air currents, just as well as they can with sight. It is important to remember that everyone has these abilities locked inside them, nonetheless, the average person has let these senses become numb, through lack of use.

It is common for a Ninja of advanced training, blindfolded or simply rendered sightless by lack of light, to be able not only to feel people's presence, but to tell how many persons are in a room, their size, age and other facts about them.

Ninja are taught to maneuver in a darkened room, in addition to relying on their senses, by use of mechanical aids, such as sticks or rolling their obi, (wide fabric belts), across the floor. The result of all this training is a familiarity with the darkness which enables the Ninja to achieve a sense of being totally at home without his eyes. He can function sightless with great mobility, which gives him a decided advantage in battle.

Example's of how Nina use this ability is in conjunction with smoke bombs or the natural element, fog. A Ninja knew that when he threw a smoke bomb, his enemy would be momentarily handicapped, because he relied on sight. The Ninja could continue the battle with the same level of expertise and easily defeat his opponent.

There is an ancient fable of one Ninja who was being tracked by a great number of Samurai. He decided that he had to break through enemy lines and he chose his time accordingly. He advanced against the pursuing army at dawn, when a heavy fog had blanketed the land. The army heard him and followed, but he led them into a rice field. He knew that they would have to advance against him in one of two ways. Either they would

come through the water (which would give them away) or they would follow the raised mound that line the paddies. He stayed on the mounds and would only encounter one or two Samurai at a time, instead of dozens. By keeping his sword in front of him, in constant motion, he easily broke through the Samurai's lines and escaped.

Another element of mental training deals with the sense of Compassion. Similar to the "Spiritual Rule," the Ninja student is taught to seek compassion as a sixth sense. By understanding others, one will be able to search (in a mental sense) the emotions of a person without hearing a word spoken. Ninja know that people can cry without shedding a tear. Today, the equivalent training is learning body language.

This mental aspect of training comes under the heading of Observation Training. Within this training the student learned to make an art of Personality Study. It was believed that all human beings fell into one of only sixty to seventy distinct personality types. Today, Ninja are trained to perceive over ninety actual traits. The object of the training was to allow a student to be able to accurately judge what a person would do, before any action was taken.

The techniques of Observation lead naturally to teachings for Memory Improvement. The Ninja was taught to retain the vast amounts of knowledge, as he was required to know, usually through association. Rhymes, catch phrases and other methods are used to help trigger the memory on a subliminal level. This allows the Ninja to respond more rapidly to stimulus, without having to think about the proper course of action.

The logical next set of mental skills taught to the Ninja are Leadership Skills. This is a very important aspect of the training which has its roots in the ancient class struggle. Ninja are always taught how to inspire others to action. This trait is a holdover from the era

when a single Ninja or small group had to teach a village how to protect themselves in times of danger. The modern film "The Magnificent Seven" is based on a classic Japanese tale which finds its catalyst, in turn, in ancient Ninja lore.

Another aspect of Mental Training deals specifically with Combat Psychology. It is understood by the Ninja that (as General Patton put it) "one does not defeat the weapons of war, but he defeats the man." If the weapons are constantly changing, it is reasoned to be better to concentrate on the human condition and use this knowledge to one's advantage. One of the central teachings on this subject is that "the weak find justification for their fears through superstition."

An excellent illustration of the application of this idea is seen in the fabled story of Noboribetsu, a Ninja of the Koga Bisen group. He was being tracked by two or three hundred Samurai, because he'd killed a local diamyō (war lord). He knew that his pursuers were traveling in three columns. One group was close behind and the other two were at a distance. He also knew that this large a group needed vast quantities of water for themselves and their horses. He therefore, led the first column into an area that had only one water source -- a deep well. He poisoned the well, and waited exhausted. The first column arrived, confident and secure by their numbers they grew comfortable and drank the poisoned water. All died slowly in their sleep. Noboribetsu then decapitated the bodies of both the men and animals. The remaining parts were cut into pieces and some were rearranged to make horrible looking creatures. The most memorable being, the body of a man with the legs of a horse. The Ninja saved only a few horses and sent these parts of bodies back on these animals. It appeared as if this single Ninja had defeated an entire column of eighty Samurai by the use of his sword or "bewitched them." The others chose to believe the impossible, rather than go any farther and look for alternatives.

It is for this reason that all Ninja were taught the strategy of disguising their methods of operation. If a Ninja won a battle with a Naginata (spear), then he makes it appear as if he used a small knife, left behind or broken off in a body. The Ninja didn't want his enemies better preparing themselves.

Additionally, a Ninja would generally make his actions look as if there was something more involved in the enemy's destruction than a contest of martial skills. For example, vengeance was made to look like robbery; a Ninja acting alone might carry several pairs of shoes and walk with varying steps to succeed in this disguise (making Samurai think several were involved versus one).

The high level of concentration needed to accomplish Ninja feats was taught through meditation. As we have already discussed, the Kuji-kiri (9 hands cutting) techniques were performed at an early age as a process of unification of mind and body. This meditation practice also aided the Ninja in learning concentration. Often the student was directed to study an object for hours and then to be able to describe another at a glance. This combination of meditative practices allowed a Ninja to focus his mind, when necessary, and to tell what was seen with only a glance. This too was applied to the Ninja's dealings with people.

One technique that was used to achieve this level of concentration was to have the young Ninja sit under the pounding waters of a waterfall, in lotus position and perform the Kuji-kiri. Success was achieved when the waterfall itself could not be felt. This technique had the added benefit of teaching the Ninja to endure the elements and physical pain through meditation, as well.

Pain reduction, was a whole mental study in itself. The process for being able to deal effectively with pain encompasses both physical and mental orientation for the student.

Ninja were taught to view pain differently than ordinary people through physical methods. Students were directed to take a small, metal ball and push it, hard into their own stomachs. Eventually, the ball can be thrust all the way against the stomach muscles without being felt. Ninja were also taught to kick trees and take severe beatings, dealt out by their mentors. Experience taught the Ninja that a simple flinch reflects the kind of break in concentration which can make all the difference between life and death, success and failure.

During a traditional “Chunin”, (master’s test), some Ninja initiates were cut with razors and salt is sprinkled on the wounds. Others, it was merely enduring a painful bamboo needled tattoo. The initiate must not flinch or he would be deemed “unworthy.” It is important to note that most Ninja sects took special care to prevent scarring of their bodies. The preservation of the body, intact, unmarked, is thought of not as a sacred matter but common sense by which to maintain their anonymity.

The Art Of Persuasion\Manipulation was another mental study that Ninja had to master. This included elements of self persuasion (hypnotism) or persuasion of others (psychological hypnosis). This was emphasized in a Ninja's training to help him learn ways to break his opponents concentration and weaken him. A Ninja conceals himself in order to pop out and appear suddenly, using devices such as a demonic mask, conveying an image of unequalled ferocity; “like deer caught in a car’s headlights,” forcing opponents to freeze in fright. At times, far more effective than just ambushing or attacking from afar.

At this point in the early stages of training, Ninja learned to apply knowledge of mind altering drugs, to enhance the effects of hypnotic suggestion. Presently, this knowledge is learned during the broader study of chemistry and other natural sciences that each Ninja must undergo. In addition to Herbology and Western Medicine, the Ninja are taught Anatomy, Biology, Physics, Metallurgy and Meteorology.

Physics was taught with an emphasis on cause and effect or action and reaction on a physical as well as philosophical level.

Anatomy was an interest of the Ninja, long before Westerners saw it as a valuable course of study. At age thirteen children learned anatomy through the responsibility of burying the dead. They were required to wash and prepare the bodies and thereby, also learn a healthy respect for life itself. It was also believed that dealing with death in this way would eliminate the tendency toward a reckless “bravado,” as the young people would see, first hand, the ultimate vulnerability of even their most respected heroes.

In the study of Chemistry, the Ninja initiate learned to prepare a variety of concoctions including gun powder and other aspects of pyrotechnics, (often using bamboo filled with gun-powder and nails or glass fragments) where boobytraps, bombs and mines could be used to protect or attack.

In their own version of Biology, the Ninja initiate learned about the value of plants, as well as, animals. He learned how to grow things and how to live off of the land. He learned what plants are good for food, which are good for medicine and which are mind altering or poisonous. Toxicology, was to be devoted to in Ninja training. These skills combined to establish a primitive system of first aid (so that each Ninja could take care of another) which also consisted of Acupressure and Acupuncture;

In addition to the Natural Sciences, Ninja were encouraged to learn the laws and principles of Mathematics, Engineering, Economics, Political Science, Business and Management, International Relations and Speech.

Math was taught to the Ninja to the degree that he could make the calculations necessary to utilize statistics, estimate time/distance and attrition rates. These abilities played a much stronger role in the past, as Ninja were vastly out numbered and their

survival relied on their ability to predict where and when an enemy would emerge (knowing distance and speed of travel) and lie in wait, rather than follow. They could also tell how long an enemy could last, on food and ammunition rations, and merely wait until the time to strike was advantageous.

Engineering was a separate study, which was taught to Ninja (along with Metallurgy to a large degree) to help them prepare everything from weapons, to shelters, to bridges, to fortresses. Without any manufactured goods to work with, in ancient Japan Ninja often were able to fortify entire villages with the raw materials on hand.

Economics became an important aspect of Ninja training when important pacts were made between traders and Ninja leaders. It also became painfully obvious in time that rice (or money) was an exchange of power in Japan. The more rice (or money) that one had, the more resources that were made available to that power.

The more that Japan's culture turned toward a Rice and Trade Economy, the more important Business and Management strategies became to the Ninja. Beyond the understanding of ways and means to manipulate the economy to one's advantage, management techniques were taught as another aspect of leadership. A Ninja, in short, had to know how to set up an entire economic structure.

The study of Political Science is a natural outcropping of an understanding of economics. Within this study, Ninja learned the importance of careful scrutiny of current events and history. The object, of course was to not repeat mistakes that had already been made. This entailed a very detailed look at history, with all variables considered.

Understanding International Relations is a course of ammunition that results from the Ninja's origins and their extensive work with traders. To facilitate their effectiveness in international affairs, several early Ninja factions were rumored to have created their own

language, which was a combination of all the languages learned through trade. This was a spoken language only, not written. Often it was used under the pretext that the speaker was babbling inanities. Only other nearby Ninja would understand fully what was being said.

These same Ninja could transform themselves into the most perfect speakers at will. For the ability to effectively communicate is one that is formally and stridently pursued. Far more damage could be inflicted upon one's enemy through the right words and conditions than any use of brute force. The mind being the most vulnerable and creative aspect of the human condition. It is no wonder that the Ninja confidently professed they were able to gain and maintain the advantage over those Samurai that only embraced the Physical and Spiritual disciplines, inherent to the martial arts. The “patron saints” of Ninja society was not their great warriors but the inventors and strategists. Nonetheless, while “*it is in the doing*” that defines the Ninja, the “*way of doing it*” is always shaped by the mental assets of a Ninja.

PHYSICAL TRAINING

When referring to any one aspect of Ninjitsu (both ancient and present day), we have discovered that, because of the society's total eclectic quality, a compendium of elements must necessarily be considered. This is also the case with the subject of physical training. The problem of analysis becomes even more complex in this area, due to the vast body of physical training techniques used to teach the principles of Ninjitsu. There are as many techniques as there are creative thoughts. The following is merely a representative sampling of the most common techniques and methods that were and are now utilized in the instruction of the whole martial science, with emphasis on those most commonly found amongst the multitude of factions of the Koga Ninja .

A Ninja student's training began at an early age. The course of study took into consideration every principle and concept that has already been discussed. During the young Ninja's training, these concepts were dealt with in a manner that was geared toward the age and attention span of the youth. Later, the same techniques were modified and made more complex for the more mature, analytical mind of the Ninja adult. For example, the child merely defends against a punch. The adult must defend against a punch without using his hands and while standing knee deep in mud.

One of the most important tools that a Ninja initiate must master is the vital points of the body's anatomy. A "vital point" being defined as a body point when struck, using the least amount of energy expended, that will kill or immobilize an opponent. There are the "primary striking areas," that when struck will result in the breaking of an opponent's timing and rhythm. Ninja pride themselves on their understanding of the workings and directional route of every nerve in the nervous system. The Ninja learns the pressure points and the workings and function of all joints and bones. The object of this training is to enable the Ninja to destroy an opponent with a single blow rather than wasting energy on "punching it out" during battle. For this reason, Koga Ninja have gained the reputation of being the most savage. If attacked, the traditional martial artist responds with a skillful block and reverse punch, his clenched fist smashing into an opponents face. The Koga Ninja, in the same situation, deftly drives a finger through the eye. The eye being obviously the most vulnerable target on the face. The Koga Ninja philosophy would ask: why strike anything else? The Koga Ninja would then break the hand and arm used in the attempt to strike him. Letting the opponent live is being benevolent. Mayhem, is therefore intended, the necessary evil to prevent future challenges to the Ninja. It was the way the Ninja would appear and disappear, instilling fear, leaving in their wake countless dead and broken

bodies, that they have been nicknamed by western journalists as, “The Magicians of Mayhem.”

Learning how the body works, to the point of being able to break it down and reconstruct it, served early on as another important function in Ninja training. Often, ancient Ninja were called upon as healers, either for their own people or by others who knew of their special abilities.

One special technique that was utilized by the Koga Ninja factions was taken from Mongolian warriorship. This was a massage technique called "Chua Ka," a mixture of acupressure and acupuncture knowledge. To numb the body before battle, Chua Ka had been used by Genghis Kahn's warriors. They became infamous for using silk shirts to foil the barbs on arrows. The Mongols (and later the Koga Ninja) would in the heat of battle and upon being struck, riding without breaking stride, as if merely discarding a piece of clothing, pull the arrows out of their pierced bodies.

Using Chua Ka, warriors would massage one another and make the body insensitive to pain, while allowing it to remain limber with lightening fast mobility and instinctive reactions. It was because of Chua Ka that Koga Ninja warriors, like the Mongols, attained the reputation of being able to, when mortally wounded, continue fighting, unaffected. The Ninja's consistent lack of reaction to injury instilled fear (and defeat) in the otherwise overwhelmed Samurai, who was disadvantaged from hearing the childhood tales taught to view the Ninja as superhuman, demonic.

To the same ends, the Koga's rivals, the Iga-Ninja, used amphetamine like concoctions to stay up for days, strengthen themselves, expand their awareness and whip themselves into a furious state of psychotic rage before battles.

The Ninja understood and guarded the benefits to be derived from this kind of

physical cause and effect. An element that they viewed, erroneously, as being only known to them. Presently, one of the reasons for basing their self image of being outside the circle, different from other martial arts.

In art , one combines elements to create new results. The artist does NOT KNOW what will be created as the result of their actions. A Ninja, on the other hand, views himself not as an artist but as a “craftsman of warriorship” that KNOWS that his theories of movements, his understanding of human psychology and his strategies, when applied, will produce specific results. It is for this reason that Koga Ninja factions chiefly insist they are separate and apart from the martial arts community, their teachings are not based upon traditional theories (as in the case of point fighting strategies) or a limited regimented martial art system (as in the case of unarmed defensive systems), but, a forever adapting, boundless, empirical MARTIAL SCIENCE. This belief shapes physical training, in that old ways are encouraged to be discarded in favor of new and improved methods.

A Ninja's physical training is mythically viewed as much more intense than other martial arts. The Ninja not only has to know how and be able to perform certain movements, but he must be able to predict or manipulate what his opponents reactions to those movements will be. In other words he has to be able to think and react several moves in advance. For example, a Ninja trains himself to work an attack at certain angles. He does this because, by working these angles, he limits the possible responses of his opponent. From the first blow, he takes into account not only the beginning moves, but the ending ones, as well as the repercussions of his actions. In the blink of an eye, the Ninja may throw a punch fully intent on the opponent blocking it in order to trap the opponent's blocking arm with his other hand. Thereupon, the Ninja withdraws his blocked arm to draw and thrust a knife under the rib cage or slash the throat, the trapped opponent unable to distance

himself or defend. This is another motive for Ninja to often disguise their movements. They know that a battle doesn't necessarily end with the first move or the first defeat of one man or another. In the not so distant past, traditionally, relatives and friends often would set out to revenge a loved-ones death. For this reason, an unevenly fought battle or assassination is made to look like a common robbery, and thus, while the Samurai thought this to be without honor, nonetheless, this ploy protected the Ninja. To Ninja, honor means vulnerability. Spiritually, it is commitment, not ego, that is the overriding precept for being Ninja. Ninja were committed to living, whereas, the Samurai found his higher purpose in the manner of his death.

Strategic concepts and actual fighting abilities are stimulated at childhood. A child destined to be Ninja is taught how to recognize stimulus and to use their hands. This talent is strengthened with the use of tiny flags of brightly colored cloth. These are waved in front of the infant or toddler and when grabbed the child's rewarded with positive reinforcement, a hug or kiss or candy treat.

The child learns to move naturally, using abilities that are innate, on a constant

reward basis. If a child is slow or lazy, he is snubbed or ignored, but never struck. There are two good theories for this. One is the belief that positive affection is the best stimulator of learning. The other reason for a restriction of physical reprimands is not to encourage the possibility that one day, one strike could easily escalate in behavior into a dangerous battle between parents, their children and siblings. The training is so intense that a young Ninja initiate might react in his own defense without thinking. This reaction would inevitably, and could immediately, result in serious injury or an accidental death.

Many of the physical training techniques have the aura of the bizarre to the untrained eye. For example, a student of Ninjitsu is taught to hang for long periods (up to several hours) not to build strength but because someday his life may depend on it.

In addition, folklore has it that the ancient Koga-Ninja were given small amounts of a certain poison in their food, from birth. Eventually, these Koga Ninja became immune to the effects of the poison, but another person would fall prey to the deadly dose in one sitting of dinner. This immunity was supposedly one of the key defenses used to weed out possible infiltrates of Koga-Ninja. Iga-Ninja were astute students of poisons but did not use them in this way.

After basic reaction skills had been sufficiently fortified in a Ninja child, he learned actual fighting application. There was specific instruction in the usual areas such as falling, striking, stances, kicks etc. Unlike the dojo trained martial artist, the Ninja receives instruction in every conceivable environment and condition. Techniques were modified to meet the special demands of any situation. Fighting is taught in trees, on snow, on sand, in hallways, on ice and onboard ship where the deck is pitching, to name but a few examples.

Again, these techniques were taught from an early age and were made into games, at first, to allow the young Ninja an opportunity to practice without having to think that he's

practicing. For instance, hide and seek is a game played by most children. Ninja children played it with an unusual fervor, sometimes lying quietly, without any movement, in a thorn-bush for hours if the "seeker" was unable to locate him. The game was taught with a special emphasis on acquiring tracking skills which allowed play to go far beyond our western concept of it.

All actual fighting techniques, even when first introduced to the children, took on this special quality of realism in multiple environments. For instance, when learning basic stances, the Ninja child not only learned to perform these movements on flat ground, but learned them to the point that he'd be able to do them on a tight-rope made of chain. To achieve this kind of perfection, the child's first attempts at these stances were on a board that was raised only a few inches from the ground. The board is progressively exchanged for a thinner one and raised higher off the ground. The end product of this progression is the tight-rope, several feet above the earth.

Another example of how this type of realism was sneaked into a young Ninja's training comes with a technique for teaching breaking. Breaking of boards or other objects has long been held a viable martial arts method to test concentration, speed and power. Ninja also use breaking for this purpose. According to legend, Ninja children (and adults) practiced and perfected their skills by breaking actual bone, as opposed to simulation materials, such as, the mentioned traditional wooden boards.

The breaking is done in two ways. Either an animal carcass, or skeleton-part (such as a skull) is used, or, in the 17th Century, when enemies were killed their bodies were often taken and hung in forests to practice on. This second method offered a two-fold learning opportunity. First, of course, the child learned what actual human bone and muscle felt like to strike. Second, children were made continually aware of human frailty and the presence

of death. Killing and death was made acceptable.

Realism was not only instructed in terms of how one deals out force but how to take it, as well. Every Ninja knew what it was to take a beating, following the precept “the way is in training,” you fight as you trained, so it makes sense to train to get hit. Endure pain.

In a family unit or school, a kumite (fighting) stage was carried out into an open area, every night. One member of the group took his turn as the unprotected fighter, while the other members donned light-weight armor made of bamboo and thick leather. This armor allowed and actually forced the student to fight back with all his might. There were NO pulled punches. If he did not defeat his opponents, then they were obligated to strike him. If he failed to protect himself, he was dealt a severe blow. There was no room for laxity. Again, “the way is in training.”

It should be emphasized that in some families, on just as an equal and regular basis, Kunochi (the female version of Ninja) were expected to take part in these kumite matches.

Another form of fighting that was dealt with in a realistic fashion was horse-combat. This entailed learning techniques, not only for riding horses, but actually taking them down and killing them with bare hands. Naturally, this knowledge became less and less valuable as horseback fighting lost strategic importance. Replaced by techniques designed to enter a moving vehicle or transfer from one to another at high speed.

After a child was fairly well schooled in hand-to-hand basics he/she was given a boken (wooden sword). The sword had practical as well as symbolic importance at all levels of Japanese society. The Ninja child after demonstrating some proficiency with the boken was rewarded with a small but real blade and taught to mimic one's elders who were foremost examples in one's training. As a teenager, nothing was forthcoming and out of necessity the student had to learn to make their own weapons.

In ancient times, it was traditionally believed that Ninja had to master the practical use of over three-hundred different weapons. The most popular traditional weapon of the Koga Ninja being the "kyotso-shogei," often used in pairs. Contrary to the Iga version of the weapon, the Koga's is longer and makes use of a chain and ball or rope and grappling-hook, versus the Iga version which only made use of an iron ring attached by rope to the Shogei. The Koga-Ninja's kyotso-shogei could be utilized in the manner of a sword, or could be thrown. They were specifically balanced so that they always stuck and were commonly dipped in the same poison which coated shuriken (throwing darts) and shaken (throwing stars).

(pen & Ink Drawing of Koga and Iga 'kyotso-shoge')

The least popular weapon was the sword, for obvious reasons. To the class-conscious Ninja, while it seemed perfectly delightful to defeat the Samurai with their own status symbol, it involved direct confrontation and fighting one's opponent on often equal grounds and means. Guns were therefore disguised inside sword cases, in order to

lure the Samurai closer to the Ninja, insuring better accuracy and an efficient outcome.

Archery was the most studied of the traditional weapons. The Ninja preferred a small bow and the crossbow, above the long bows of the Samurai.

Today, following the 16th century innovation of firearms, these have become the weapons of preference with the traditional learned as backups. All Ninja consider the most valuable weapons in their arsenal to be those improvised as their first means of defense. The value is placed upon using the "natural weapons" (thorn-bushes, rocks, cliffs, tree-branches) as well as manufactured items that are not commonly held as weapons (chairs, tables, pot-lids and farm tools). Farm tools became especially popular on Okinawa as weapons, when prohibitions against peasants owning conventional weapons went into effect.

Today, Ninja make use of credit cards, straws and hairbrushes, (to name but three), and can become extremely deadly with any of these. They know that most ordinary objects, in trained and skilled hands, can be used to kill or maim.

Ninja adaptation has forced them to become not archers but snipers. They practice while hunting combat techniques and variations for each.

As a game of concentration, present day Ninja throw any kind of edged object and can make it stick, from the ancient and traditional "chopsticks" to the more modern and utilitarian tire-iron. Sparring (kumite) takes place, at all times, with all of these weapons, as well as unarmed.

In the clan atmosphere, two nights were often set aside for acting out scenarios. Ninja cells and, sometimes, Ninja sub-groups, acted out specific emergency, life-threatening situations, to perfect their individual role as part of the group's concentrated plan of action. Each plan (or counter-measure) was given a short code name

or word. A team was expected to rush into proper action at the mention of the code word. The thinking behind this training stems from the numerous attacks that the families often had to endure, in the past. If a home was being raided, instead of becoming the intended victims, the designated member of a clan might call out one of the prearranged counter-measures and everyone in the household would move, united against their attackers. This often would turn the tables on attackers who were often skillful swordsmen, Ronin (masterless Samurai).

According to folk tales Ninja children were taught the value of coordinated effort by first learning individual coordination. First, the child was given a shell and instructed to bounce the shell off a wall, alternating hands, without catching it or letting the shell fall. This action was kept up for hours on end. In this way the child learns coordination as well as patience and concentration.

Endurance was taught to Ninja through the two most common methods of running and swimming. Both of these could be performed by adept Ninja practitioners over long distances.

Fabled Ninja practitioners were credited with the ability to cover on foot up to 100 miles in a single day. This seems incredible until we examine other peoples, notably certain Native American tribes, who have been documented to daily travel upwards of 70 to 80 miles. There is a fabled story credited to Tanaka-sama, (Hanchi Dux's teacher), who was famous in his youth for running family messages from one town to the next. Seventy years later, a relative off-handily had asked Tanaka-sama (now nearing eighty), if he still ran. Tanaka-sama responded that he was getting older and did not run the same as he used to. Spawned to curiosity by ancient tales, his relation queried the old man as to exactly how far then does he think he could run. The old man said he was too old to remember. Since he

had turned seventy-five he had slowed down quite a bit. He could only "run today, tomorrow and part of the next day, but that's all."

Children were taught to swim when they are still infants. This is particularly noteworthy, since the ability to swim was a rare one in early Japan. Ninja were also taught to hold their breath for long periods of time. This ability proved very valuable when pretending to be drowned, which was easy to convince a non-swimming pursuer of, since it was commonly believed that anyone who went into the water over their head would probably die.

Ninja were taught to be totally comfortable in and around water in a number of ways. Most climbing was also taught over water, as at a cliff near a waterfall. The reasoning here was that the climber could more easily lose a fear of heights if he knew a mistake would only result in getting wet. Jumping into water, was a secondary skill learned by this method of teaching the art of climbing.

Jumping from heights of up to seventy feet into water, were common for Ninja. Ninja also learned to jump from heights onto land, as well as from great heights while tied to a rope. This final skill proved essential in escapes from fortresses. Ninja would not want to take the time for a slow climb down a high wall with guardsmen shooting down after them. They would, therefore, tie one end of a rope to the top of the wall, the other to themselves and jump. This feat required a special knowledge of hemp ropes that stretched in accordance to the distance to the ground from the walls' top. To make a hasty escape, the rope had to dangle with the jumper within the striking distance of an accomplice who would cut the rope, freeing the jumper. When the rope stretched it could snap or worse, the jumper hit the ground head first.

This skill of jumping while tied to a higher object was also utilized in combat

against horsemen. The Ninja could hide in trees and jump down onto an oncoming rider, knocking him from his horse. The loose horse added to the chaos on the ground, while the Ninja climbed the rope, back into the trees.

In addition to the above mentioned water-skills, ancient Ninja used bamboo reeds to hide underwater and made canoes that were hallowed out logs that could be flipped-over to camouflage their presence

Ninja training, at it's summit, included every form of body-building and conditioning to some degree. To name them all would necessitate several volumes, and would always be non-conclusive. There were a number of special skills, however, that still deserve mention. This includes Seduction, taught almost as a separate martial science. This was introduced to children and sadly, in some Ninja factions, sexual exploitation was used to manipulate the violated ones behavior for when they reached adulthood. It was stressed that "love" is the greatest shifting of power. A state of mind in which one can be easily manipulated (i.e. jealousy) and thereby, is capable of being one of the most devastating methods to destroy an adversary.

Because of the Ninja's special attitude about sexuality, one of the greatest legendary Ninja warriors of all time was a woman. She was capable of getting to those whom, because of position and power, were believed to be untouchable. It is suggested that her name became the foundation of the small town of Enryakuji in Japan. She is reported to have killed over three hundred men by driving a poisoned needle into the backs of their necks during the throes of passion. She was a master of instigation and manipulation. Such as, creating duels, by whispering false confessions to her lovers that she had been raped by a leading daimyo or perhaps her lover's best friend, the intended target. Consequently, Enryakuji manipulated herself through marriage, as well. Acquiring wealth and status. She

is even believed to have been a polygamist, assuming different identities and, unbeknownst to each other, married to several men at the same time.

This Kunochi, female Ninja, was also renowned for her abilities in combat and was reported to have, armed only with a kyotso-shogei and naginata (spear), in a single battle, singlehandedly, slayed five Samurai on horseback. From the tales of the Koga's Erazan clan, this Kunochi, eventually, ended up as the first and only woman to head a Ninja group/clan.

In connection with Enryakuji's fabled feats, assassination was thought of as a special skill. The reason that assassination took on such importance is summed up in the old Ninja saying *"to kill the snake you must crush the head."* This catch phrase refers to the Samurai's unusual trait to, after their leader had been assassinated, commit suicide (in order to protect their Lord when he enters the other world). Thus the Ninja saw the death of one man led to the demise of many.

Eventually, because of the obvious value of the art, the Ninja perfected the art of the totally undetectable kill, the legendary "Death Touch." What the Chinese called 'Dim Mak'. This technique applied "Chua Ka" principles (Mongolian accupressure/massage) and allowed someone to be struck with little force, leaving no marks or bruises, yet caused extreme internal damage which resulted in death. The symptoms would never appear until hours, even days later. Today, this skill is demonstrated by modern day Ninja who can, after stacking bricks and tiles of different densities, strike the pile with little force and shatter the bottom brick, leaving the remaining bricks and delicate tiles (like the body) intact.

Other skills in this "Special" category included those that were thought of as Survival Skills. Any skill, in fact, could become a survival skill at any time. The understanding of this principle emphasizes "survival over a glorious death" the key element

in Ninja morality, transcending almost all other principles. Amongst this special category Ninja mastered breaking/entering, (all facets, including lock-picking). One also learned to perfect the ability to fight while completely shackled, (utilizing any free part of the body). Ninja also had to possess the ability to conquer the elements and exist totally independent of others. They had to be able to live off the land, needing nothing save for their skill to survive in any environment, (including desert, since the Gobi in China was sometimes their battleground). Ninja were often called upon to fight and gather information in distant foreign lands, therefore they had to be skilled in the science of navigation, (land and sea), without the aid of maps.

Ninja prepared themselves for any eventuality, such as capture. "Inpo", (escape and evasion) is just one example of the Ninja's scope of preparedness. "Inpo" taught Ninja how to dislocate their joints in order to slip out of shackles or ropes, not unlike the world's most renowned escape artist, the great Houdini. Joint dislocation enabled the Ninja to hide in otherwise impossible spaces. By so doing they were often smuggled from a dangerous spot by the aid of foreign traders who they befriended, or totally unsuspecting souls paid to transport a small but heavy box or vase.

Often applied in escape and attack situations, Diversion is another discipline the Ninja had to master. Ancient Ninja learned the value of mimicking not only the sounds of animals but the voices of powerful enemies. To confuse and misdirect the Samurai, Ninja would call out orders in the voices of Samurai leaders. The animal sounds were used as a form of communication when spoken words and sign language was impossible.

Escape and Raiding, (a separate study) spawns other disciplines such as parachuting and hang-gliding, disguise, camouflage, slight of hand, misdirection, magic tricks, props, special effects and masks, to name but a few.

Art was a learned skill, especially, the making and the use of Masks, favored by the Koga clans of Ninjitsu. While the Ninja already possessed a psychological advantage over their enemies, hiding their faces behind hoods, the Koga would further unsettle their opponents by wearing horrifying masks under their hood. This tactic served so well that Ninja were earnestly believed to be demons. The Koga's Bisen group reinforced the Samurai's superstition by being the first Ninja to blow smoke, powder, fire and poison tipped needles from tubes hidden behind the mouth holes of their masks. The Bisen were the most infamous for ripping off their hoods, exposing their masks in order to momentarily stun and paralyze their enemies with fear.

The culmination of all this training was tested in as severe a manner as might be expected. There were really no blackbelts in Ninjitsu. Rather, rank was given upon acceptance into the clan. Acceptance, was earned after years of training and only when the student had put all of his knowledge to one final test, and survived.

(pen & ink Ghost Mask drawing)

HISTORY (SHI)

(pen & Ink Ninja drawing)

NINJITSU
Past to Present

‘PING FA’
(The Art of War)
by
Sun Tzu

Prince Regent Shotoku
(593-623 AD)

Yamabushi En-No-Gyoja
(Shugendo)

Heike Clan

(794-1185 AD)

Genji Clan

Kurama Hachi ryu
School

Yoshitune ryu
School

Kamakura Period
“Golden Age of Ninjitsu”
(1192-1333 AD)

IGA System
Founded
(Momochi, Oe,
& Hattori Clans)

KOGA System
Founded
(50 Families)

Muromachi Period
(1390-1600 AD)

Kusunoki ryu
School
(1300-1600 AD)

Yagyu ryu School
(1600's -)

Togakure ryu School
(34 Generations)

Tanaka Clan
(40 Generations)

Yoshiaka Hattsumi
(IGA System)

Frank Dux
(KOGA Yamabushi
System)

HISTORY (SHI)

Throughout the annals of Japan's colorful history, no single breed of humans wrecked more havoc or spawned more terror than the Ninja.

Cloaked in black from head to toe, the mere mention of the name "Ninja," in Japan, conjured up images of superhumans who could, with occult powers fly like birds or transform themselves into smoke to escape from enemies.

In the western world, the Ninja is portrayed, through film, television or in print, in the highly fictionalized role of assassin, spy or elite member of an evil, underground cult.

While there is some basis to the many exaggerations surrounding the image of the Ninja, the truth is they were nothing more than a people, forced by historical necessity to become the warrior wizards of Japan. For instance, when it became apparent that the use of an air attack would serve beneficial, the Ninja DID fly, but with the use of giant kites that were not unlike modern-day hang-gliders. Brilliant yes, but not magical.

To begin to understand how the secret art of the Ninja was allowed to flourish "one must look to the roots of the tree to find its strength."

To find the origins of Ninjitsu we see that these roots lay in the teachings of the ancient Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu who lived sometime between 500 and 300 B.C. However, it wasn't until the 6th century A.D. when these principles and ideas were

cultivated in their entirety, utilized to their fullest potential as written in Sun Tzu's "Book of War," the "Ping Fa."

'Ping Fa', better known as 'The Art of War' by Sun Tzu, contains the first written recognition of the importance of undercover warfare. The Chinese Sun Tzu, ('Sonshi' in Japanese), is believed to have lived sometime between the sixth and third century B.C. The Art of War is the first great military classic, with its fundamental philosophy being that an army should not attack an enemy until the enemy has been made vulnerable from within.. The conventional clash of armies on the battle field , was viewed as a last resort. In its account of spies, (the thirteenth chapter), Sun Tzu wrote that what makes a wise general is the possession of foreknowledge. This foreknowledge can only come from agents who have become familiar with the enemy situation .

According to Japanese tradition the 'Art of War' was introduced to Japan by Kibi Makibi (693-775 AD). In the position of Ambassador to China, under Prince Regent Shotoku., Makibi made two trips to China and brought back several texts, one of which was the 'Ping Fa'. The Japanese text 'Shoku Nihongi', compiled approximately 747 AD, has several quotations from the 'Art of War'.

The person most responsible for implementing the "Ping Fa" was Prince Regent Shotoku (593-622 A.D.). He introduced the principles of "Ping Fa" to Japan as a means of settling civil strife. Adherence to these principles helped provide him with intelligence information and offered him personal security (both valuable commodities for political figures, then and now).

Trusting no one in his own country, Prince Regent Shotoku insured absolute loyalty by recruiting exceptional men and women--warriors, slaves, monks, craftsmen, etc.--from throughout the eastern world. This provided that everyone who interacted with him, was solely dependent upon him for their existence in Japan. He then spared no expense for their training and development. In essence, Shotoku created a secret, nameless warrior class to serve only him. Warriors that were free of the confines of the Bushido Code (the samurai code of chivalry).

From the kingdom of Silla, (Southeast Korea), Shotoku enlisted to his cause Chinese warriors and Buddhist monks. He could do this because an earlier alliance had been formed between Silla and China in the time of Emperor Sui, (589 A.D.).

By enlisting new ideas into the strictly forged concepts of Japanese methodology,

enlightenment was spawned. From the Chinese warriors knowledge of gun-powder, archery and circular movement was contributed. The latter fascinated Shotoku.

Because the Bushido Code calls for a devotee to "follow one path," all advances in traditional Japanese martial arts are based on linear movements. All defenses and blocks, in turn, are also based on being attacked in a straight-line fashion.

Shotoku believed that by introducing circular and angular movements, the linear fundamentals would not hold true. Thus, he circumvented traditional strategies and tactics. Ninjitsu, based on these "new" principles, is therefore thought to be a decisive advantage over strict, traditional Japanese styles.

In exchange for religious freedoms, the Chinese monks, some Taoist and some Buddhist, contributed their knowledge of herbology, philosophy, logic, analytic thought and the animal system. This system is best remembered and, whose strikes; i.e. crane, tiger, and bear are still practiced by Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu descendants.

Another contribution survives with the use of the Taoist "I Ching." These principles of strategy and tactics are based on the five elements of "Chi" (earth), "Sui" (Water), "Ka" (fire), "Fu" (wind) and "Ku" (void). The Ninja applied these concepts to the corresponding body movement whereas the Earth, translated into stances, feet firmly planted in place, immovable; Water, applied to adaptability, shapeless, techniques such as angling away from an attack; Fire, relates to jamming an attack by moving forward; Wind, corresponds to maneuvers such as circular blocks, tumbling, sidestepping and slipping evasions; And, Void, was taught in conjunction to hiding or actions through psychological means.

Through his Chinese mercenaries, Shotoku learned first hand of the great battles and defeats of the Emperor Sui, who mounted a massive invasion (over a million warriors) against the Koguryo Kingdom, (North Korea, approx. 589 A.D.). The characteristics of

these warriors were Spartan-like, ambitious, fond of war and raiding, extremely violent and courageous.

Shotoku risked the loss of his Silla ties and undertook the recruitment and smuggling of these infamous Koguryo warriors through Silla to Japan. Koguryo and Silla were at war at the time. Shotoku's desires prevailing, the Koguryo warriors took their place in his ranks. They were especially favored by Shotoku since they had inflicted such severe defeats on Silla's allies, the Chinese, they had caused the Sui Dynasty to fall...marking the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (618-904 A.D.).

With Shotoku's success in obtaining these warriors and adding them to his human arsenal, the Koguryo uniquely influenced the foundations of Ninjitsu. The Koguryo contributed to this newly formed warrior society their Spartan-like ideals--training should begin at childhood, use of guerrilla tactics (hit and run), and a violent, close unarmed combat style based on bone breaking and eye gouging.

When the Koguryo warriors joined Shotoku's forces, Mongols also arrived. These men contributed their unmatched abilities as horsemen, silent walking arts, and a massage technique called "Chua Ka." "Chua Ka" is a combination of acupuncture and acupressure manipulations, from which the famous "Ninja Death Touch" is derived.

Ancient Ninja legends, handed down from generation to generation, proclaim that Shotoku's search for "the finest ever to be gathered" caused him to send agents as far as India, the Middle East and perhaps even parts of Europe.

Evidence of this final belief is related in the legend of the Ninja named Kobiashi, who was said to have possessed blue eyes and a six foot, three inch stature (possibly due to Aryan ancestry).

The earliest known printed depiction of a ninja, (from a woodblock printed edition of the Hojo

Godai-ki, circa 1659), is of the rappa Fuma(Kazama) Kotaro. The demonic Kotaro is depicted as a giant compared to the others in the print.

According to legend, Kobiashi became the first "Yamabushi" or "mountain warrior." He single-handedly defeated eighty Samurai in one day. During this same battle, the lives of two other Samurai were spared by Kobiashi so that they could return to their comrades and relate the event. The thinking was that these two could serve as an eyewitness warning to others never to return and oppose Kobiashi, otherwise he would come down from the mountain and slay all, at will.

The possible factuality of this legend is compounded by the fact that the "Yamabushi" people of the Koga region in Japan do not share the traditional Japanese feature of an oval, flat face. Their features include high cheek-bones and strong jaw lines. Some of these people possess traits that are definitely foreign to Japan. For example, many of them are unable to grow facial hair, something that is true only amongst descendants of Indian or Nomadic Mongol tribes.

II

After the death of Prince Regent Shotoku, the Japanese became embroiled in a bitter power struggle between Buddhist and Shinto factions. Both were concerned over which of their doctrines would be designated as the official state religion.

During this controversy, the secret warrior class that was created by Shotoku, fled. Many returned to their homelands while a few took refuge in the Koga mountains. They were concerned over the social climate and believed that once the struggle involved

influential court nobles, war would break out and they might be made into scapegoats.

In the mountains, the Shotoku warrior class intermarried with villagers and established ties with the mountains Japanese inhabitants. The inhabitants, mostly Buddhists, eagerly accepted their tutelage. Later, after repelling enormously overwhelming numbers of bandits, the Shotoku warriors earned the title of "Yamabushi" (mountain warriors) which was bestowed upon them by the low-land, Shinto nobles.

At this time, the elite warrior class of Shotoku numbered fifty families. Here is when the Yamabushi named En-no-Gyoja appeared on the scene and tried to restore order with "Shugendo," a new way of propagating Buddhism. As En-no-Gyoja's campaign gained increasing support from the people, the aristocracy forced a showdown with En-no-Gyoja and his followers.

Many popular books on the ninja have mistakenly assumed that the founder of Shugendo, ('way of supernatural powers'), En-no-Gyoja, was the first ninja. This is because of confusion between the 'Yamabushi' and the belligerent warrior monks, Sohei'. The Sohei organized private armies to defend the interests of the Buddhist foundations of Nara and Kyoto from approximately the tenth century AD onwards. It was Emperor Shirakawa (1073-1086 AD) that complained that only three things disregarded his wishes: the rushing waters of the Kumo River, the unpredictable dice, and the mountain priests.

En-no-Gyoja is recorded as 'En-no-Ozuno, in the 'Shoku Nihongi'. He was banished in 669 AD on charges of using his Shugendo (powers) to control people. En-no Gyoja is the originator of the mountain pilgrimage tradition which would become organized as a deeply symbolic journey by the Kamakura Period.

Motivated by fears that the Yamabushi were gaining ruling power, the nobles sent large government forces to subdue them. The Yamabushi, having little knowledge of military tactics called upon the fifty families to train and lead them in battle. The odds were great. But, the fifty Shotoku families saw that they had no choice but to lead the Yamabushi, if they were to cement their status as Yamabushi themselves, and not outsiders.

This move enabled the fifty families to win absolute support of the people of the mountain, which made it possible for them to live in secrecy and eventually establish the Ninja network throughout all of Japan. This also marked the first time that Sun Tzu's tactics

were put to the test on a collective, as well as an individual basis in Japan.

The Shinto aristocrats were unable to conquer the highlands. Buddhist priests began to take refuge in the villages of the Yamabushi, away from the Shinto aristocracy that was calling for the Shinto purification of Japan. This policy, in short, amounted to nothing more than genocide for all unbelievers--Shinto now being accepted as the "only way." It also marked the beginning of the class struggle which would produce and support the Ninja.

Confident that Buddhists were no longer a threat to them, the nobles turned their attentions to each other and became involved in a bitter, internal dispute. This gave the Yamabushi even more time to cultivate their art.

By the Heian period (794-1185) the ancient science of "Omyodo"--which includes astronomy, astrology, the Chinese art of divination and logic--became an integral part of Ninjitsu. This martial science, during the Heian period took a firm root and assumed the basic form it was to follow over the next four centuries.

During this turbulent era, the Genji clan ruled Japan, overshadowed by its rival the Heike clan. Both courted the Yamabushi to join their ranks, their skills in battle now becoming legendary. The Yamabushi became troubled, fearing now that they would be forced to choose sides in a struggle that really did not concern them. On the other hand, if they did not choose, they might be forced to face each clan's wrath. What the Yamabushi decided, characteristically, in keeping with Ninja-like philosophy, was to teach both sides. To this end they established the Mount Kurama, Hachi-ryu school.

The school was opened at the base of Mt. Kurama by the Koga-Yamabushi family Hachi. Both Heike and Genji warriors studied various martial art there--Kenjitsu (sword combat), Juijitsu (unarmed combat), Kyujitsu (archery), Bojitsu (staff fighting), Yarijitsu (spear combat), Iaijitsu (fast-draw swordsmanship) to name but a few.

The Genji and Heike learned, at times, under the same master. So, according to legend, to avoid confrontations that might result in duels, all students were instructed to enter the school naked, save for a loin-cloth. Once inside, the student was pampered, bathed and then dressed in the school colors of gray and black.

The Hachi-ryu became especially favored and embraced by the Samurai, because it was incredibly systematized, stylized and refined to the point that it was considered cultural exercises. This was exactly the intention of the Yamabushi. They could make peace with both sides while keeping their own pragmatic style for themselves along with all the counters and secret knowledge of the weaknesses that existed in the style they were now teaching. Thus, the Yamabushi (Ninja forerunners) increased their individual and collective tactics and strategies by leaps and bounds, and kept well advanced over the leading Samurai who would return to their respective diamyos (feudal lords) and take the position as master instructor for the other troops.

By the end of the Heian period in 1185, the central government in Kyoto had become so weak that the Yamabushi of Mt. Kurama (just north of the capitol) began to operate--resisting and forcing the collapse of various Diamyos.

It is important to remember that, at this time the Samurai (to serve, or more precisely to 'be' served like a king) were extremely brutal. They practiced their Bushido code to the very letter. The concept of the "one path" was translated by them to the extreme that left-handed children (opposite the norm for the "One Path") were killed. Those that had to be forcibly taken from their parents were then disemboweled in the local, public square.

There are peasant tales that the Yamabushi, clad from head to toe in black with hoods to conceal their identity, would abduct children and take them to the mountains to be raised as their own. It is for this reason that the Ninja trains to be ambidextrous. It was also

due to these rescues that the Ninja were considered gangsters or scum--acting in blatant opposition to the Bushido Code, representative of the norms of the Japanese ruling class. They would become a symbol of class resistance to the aristocracy, threatening the caste system as a whole.

During this time the peasants only reason for living, according to the Samurai, was to serve the Samurai. It was not uncommon for a Samurai to decapitate a peasant, without warning, merely to try out a new blade. The Yamabushi, clad again in blue/black to assist them in blending into the darkness, would appear and disappear against these cruel Samurai, leaving such Samurai and their offensive "new blade" face down in the dust. Thus, the common people named these mystery men "NINJA"--'Nin' meaning simultaneously 'to hide within; spirit; skill; the cutting-edge of a blade.' 'Ja' is a term of assignation. Therefore, to be Ninja can be interpreted as someone "whose spirit and skill are as sharp as the edge of a blade" or by its first symbol "human being, hiding, warrior."

At this time, the legend of the Ninja began to take shape with campfire tales that while the Samurai continued to wander during the daytime, ignoring the changing social climate and needs of the people, the Yamabushi Ninja or Mt. Kurama were becoming so proficient in their art that three of them literally ruled the capitol of Kyoto at night. Like Robin Hood, these Ninja would steal back from the Samurai what the Samurai plundered and stole from the peasants and surrounding townships. Some of the things that the Samurai were fond of taking included the wives and daughters of the peasant farmers. These women were usually conscripted into the ranks of a Samurai's concubine. Later, women were to take an equal place in Ninjitsu training and would become formidable adversaries themselves, putting a damper on many a Samurai's amorous intentions. And all tales, especially, regarding the Ninja, seem to have some truth to them.

(small pen & ink ninja drawing)

III

The first and oldest credited school of Ninjitsu was supposedly founded by the Koga-Yamabushi, Genji war hero, Yoshitsune. The Yoshitsune-ryu school stressed jumping and the strategy for carrying out the surprise attack. This strategy, has been embraced by a number of militarists even to this day, including the Japanese who utilized it to defeat the Chinese in 1895, the Russians at Port Arthur in 1904 and the Americans at Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Yoshitsune himself became distinguished by introducing the hit-and-run tactic of his Koguryo ancestors when he used it against the Ainu and other rebels along the Japanese frontier. In a similar fashion the U.S. cavalry was dispatched to quell unrest among the American Indians.

According to Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu history, Yoshitsune made all of his students swear to abandon and/or resist the Bushido Code. They were told that the code was a falsehood, made to trap and keep one a prisoner of the caste system. At the core of this falsehood was the belief that life was a game, death its only end and reward. In death the grander and higher reward of life was achieved. Thus, in suicide there was honor.

Philosophically, Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu emphasizes respect for all forms of life; and to more fully understand and realize life, the Ninja studies "death"--in direct contrast to

the Samurai to whom the rules were all important and "life" was only a game to be played. The goal of the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja, by "Western" morality, is directed to enhancing inner worth and solidifying the notion that "life" has absolute value.

Only by living can one contribute to his own kind. With these beliefs, the Samurai idea of honor and confronting your enemy on equal terms on the battlefield, was easily dismissed.

Another contribution by Yoshitsune was the formal introduction of Shurikenjitsu, (blade/star throwing), as an independent study. He also combined the art of throwing with toxicology (study of poisons). These two disciplines, combined, allowed the Ninja's blades to gain a reputation as something to be feared. All the blade had to do was break the surface of the skin of an opponent in order to deal a fatal blow. This made it possible for a Ninja to handle multiple attackers, sometimes upwards of twenty, with very little difficulty. This tactic, along with the use of blowguns and climbing techniques was borrowed from Yoshitsune's long past enemies, the Ainu.

It is because of Yoshitsune's teachings of synthesizing every pragmatic form of combat (taking only the deadliest, most effective techniques and disregarding the ritual) that Ninjitsu can be defined as an eclectic martial science--always changing with time and technology, always improving to the point that it remains a system of total self-defense. Unlike the Samurai's view of life as a "game to be played," Ninja viewed their art on the much grander scale of "man vs. man; man vs. the elements." Their art was and is unequalled in its scope, efficiency and ferocity.

Translating Ninjitsu in a more figurative sense then, it means "the battlefield skill of hiding within" or "the art of invisibility, stealth." Some Ninja philosophers believe that the art received its name from a letter that was carried between two daimyos. In this

communication one diamyō warned, "beware of the demon-men when looked for cannot be found."

The beginning of the Golden Age of Ninjitsu coincides with the entrance into the Kamakura Period (1192-1333 A.D.). As described by Andrew Adams in his book "Ninja, The Invisible Assassins." This age would spread over four centuries, making the Ninja, literally, legends in their own time.

By 1192, over twenty-five clans of Ninjitsu had sprung up. This was merely due to the original fifty Yamabushi-Ninja families having grown and spread themselves throughout all of Japan. Each of these clans produced a group of warriors that was loyal to any one family. The ten most powerful of these groups were the: (1)Koga, (2)Iga, (3)Bisen, (4)Erazen, (5)Haguro, (6)Nakagana, (7)Uesugi, (8)Masuda, (9)Kuroda, and (10)Fukushima. The number of Ninja groups and sub-groups exceeded several hundred (the Natori, Hatano, Yagyu to name but a few Koga sub-groups).

By the late 12th century an ideological schism occurred within the Ninja ranks that would haunt Ninja practitioners for centuries to come. Out of this schism ALL Ninja would be seen in a dark light, very much to the contrary of the traditional folk-heroes they had become. The event that caused the change is attributed to the split with the Iga clan.

IV

In 1192, forty-nine Ninja sub-groups, dominated by three Ninja families--the Oe, Hattori and Momochi clans, broke away from the original fifty Yamabushi-Ninja families to form their own families and sub-groups. These three families and their respective sub-groups established the Iga clan, jointly ruling Ninja in Iga Province (Mei prefecture). In the Koga Province to the north, (Shiga prefecture), more than fifty Ninja family groups and

seventeen-hundred sub-groups provided the foundation for the Koga-ryu of Ninjitsu. So named after the most powerful of the fifty family groups, the Koga, with over two hundred sub-groups under its direct control.

The Iga clan soon found themselves alone, boxed in on all sides by the Koga and the rest of the Ninja clans. These other groups were spread out all over Japan. The Iga, meanwhile, were laying plans to establish the Hakuho (White Phoenix) castle of Iga Ueno. There, the families regrouped, recruited and retrained "Ronin" (unemployed, masterless Samurai). They also adopted any other cut-throat who was willing to swear total allegiance to the Oe, Hattori or Momochi clans. The Iga then sold their abilities to the highest bidder.

It is for this reason that Iga Province is thought of as the cradle of Ninjitsu. In Iga, a daimyo could easily find and hire Ninja to fulfill the most needed of five functions: spying, gathering information, carrying secret messages, infiltrating the enemy headquarters to cause confusion before or during a battle, or assassination.

Somewhat resembling the American Civil War, Japan was divided by northern and southern dynasties. From this time onward, Iga and Koga-Yamabushi Ninja became sworn enemies.

The Koga aligned themselves to the north, the Iga to the south. The north finally subdued the south in 1392 and both the north and south were unified...except for the Koga and Iga clans. Even today, six centuries later, their rivalry still exists.

Seventy-five years into the Muromachi Era (1390-1600), and Japan would become, again, a nation of rebellion and wars. The country was literally ripped apart by one struggle after another. The nation was broken up into small lands, each with a daimyo (warlord), each trying to expand his boundaries. This brought about a collapse of any kind of law and order. Robbery, rape and murder became ordinary events that were almost acceptable as

part of day-to-day life. The absence of morals created a situation where only the strong could survive.

In the midst of this chaos, the Ninja came into his own. The clan loyalties sustained and protected its members from harm through unity and common purpose. In places like Masuda, it is folklore that the Samurai or ronin never ventured within fifty miles. They knew that if they did, they would never be seen again. The common people of Masuda, many of them Ninja families, flourished with trade and in peace, while the rest of Japan became an example of man's inhumanity against man.

The loyalties of various Ninja clans became vital to the many warlords. These daimyos needed to know the strength of their many enemies, their weaknesses and plans for expansion.

With this new demand for intelligence services, the Koga-Ninja secured a variety of secret alliances and treaties which provided rights for peasants (both in property and personal), merchants and anyone else who was below Samurai status. These treaties secured for the common man some sense of justice...providing that the country could be reunited.

When these treaties were established the Koga-Yamabushi, with the help of a former Koga double agent, Masahige Kusunoki, formed the Kusunoki-ryu school. This school taught individual and collective fighting techniques, but also brought a new, formal dimension to the system of Ninjitsu. This dimension was dedicated to spying and espionage.

Masahige Kusunoki based his teachings on his personal experiences. These experiences included his being a Koga agent who had infiltrated the Iga-Ninja ranks. He was so successful that he earned his way, within this clan, to a position of great authority.

Eventually, he was even put in charge of operating a ring of forty-eight Iga-Ninja agents who were living in the cities of Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe. Their mission was to collect information on hostile clans and agents' movements.

Kusunoki's teachings still remain guarded - especially his implementation for techniques of counter intelligence. These teachings are exclusively Koga and according to Koga descendants, have never been adopted as an official part of the Iga system's teaching.

Kusunoki attributed his success as a spy to his ability to appeal to his enemies ultimate weakness--ego. He wormed his way into the Iga ranks with flattery, which was often mistaken for true loyalty. The Koga, on the other hand, reward rank only with victory through struggle. The greater the struggle, the greater the loyalty perceived and therefore, the greater the reward.

For the Koga-Yamabushi it was demanded in the teachings that one be free of ego: "You can only find true strength within yourself. Seek your true self and there you will find your salvation and the freedom to fulfill or deny your desires."

The Iga-Ninja although still highly disciplined, began to deteriorate into a symbol of perversion. The Iga leaders, viewed as lacking idealistic goals and aims, hoped perhaps that their wealth, power and their acceptance of the Bushido Code would earn them acceptance among the Japanese ruling class. This is evident today as some Iga descendants continue to cling to the ideas of Bushido. Some Iga-Ninja practitioners say that it is an integral part of Ninjitsu. This is only based on ancient propaganda, which called for or described the acceptance of Bushido by the Iga.

The families of Ninjitsu who clung to the principles of the original Yamabushi, saw the Iga's acceptance of Bushido as the ultimate sell-out of traditional Ninja values. An absurdity without comparison, saw the Iga-Ninja being hired and made wealthy by doing

deeds that the Samurai were prevented from doing, bound by the Bushido code.

As for the Koga groups, they were still the most valued and feared of all Ninja. For, in a land of chaos, the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja was a disciplined creature. In a land without morals, by western standards, the Koga Ninja was motivated by a moral code that was almost saintly-- devoid of greed and the passions of the flesh. He did not kill for himself or for personal gain--a killing machine that was not available for hire. Unknowingly, he became the secret answer to quell the chaos that permeated the Sengoku Era. The Ninja became that answer because he/she was meticulously honed, over centuries of struggle, for great sacrifice.

V

During those four centuries of ceaseless civil war and petty power struggles, the

Ninja increased their advantage over the Samurai with new strategy and tactics through technology.

In 1543, the Ninja acquired guns (firelocks) from Portuguese traders. It was not, however, until the Imperial Restoration in 1868 and the Satsuma Rebellion a decade later that guns played a decisive role in Samurai military encounters. In other words, Ninja tactics were over three hundred years ahead of the Samurai's.

On the other hand, the introduction of firearms did not alter the Ninja's traditional methods of espionage, but merely enhanced his effectiveness and allowed him to expand the use of these tactics on an even greater scale. One such variance was the creation of the "poison water-wheel." This was a device that looked like a giant Ferris wheel. The wheel would go around with Ninja warriors hidden inside tiny cubicles attached to the wheel. From each cubicle, as it reached the peak of the wheel, the Ninja would fire out of and down into a courtyard of a defending castle or stronghold. They would pick off the guards at will, until the guards could no longer man the walls, then the final assault would take place.

The use of smoke grenades had been present as a part of the Ninja's tricks since the Chinese contributions under Shotoku. However, the hotter burning powder of the Portuguese made for pocket-sized guns that could be disguised as walking sticks, flutes or knives. It also made possible the development of bombs, explosive arrows, landmines and wooden cannons. Some of the later were made small enough to be operated like bazookas.

Although the Koga Province was ruled by more than fifty Ninja family groups, only two old families by 1578 held sway in Iga Province. The Hattori family governed the central sector of the Province, while the Momochi clan ruled the south.

Under the alias of the Fujibayashi family, the Momochi clan established ties and

control over several Koga sub-groups. These Koga-subgroups defected to the Iga under promises of great wealth and-power. This led to a common historical error that the Koga and Iga clans were finally aligned.

In 1562 the Koga clans support played a decisive role for Lord Nobunaga Oda and his two generals, Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Ieyasu Tokugawa. With the support of the Koga and the information that they provided Nobunaga, the Koga made it possible for him to reunify Japan, gaining dominance over the Imperial court and the Shogunate (military government) itself by 1568.

Along with intelligence information, the Koga Ninja helped Nobunaga obtain muskets and cannons from Portuguese traders. The Koga also helped in the training of peasant soldiers who proved equally effective as Samurai soldiers.

In 1573, the Shogunate was abolished for all practical purposes. During this time the Iga (whose leadership was rejected despite numerous attempts to join the ruling class) were politically forced to re-align themselves with various Buddhist sects.

The Buddhists, swayed by the Iga, moved toward the goal of overthrowing Nobunaga and sponsored several assassination attempts by Iga-Ninja. The Iga mission, however, produced nothing but failures. The Buddhist's hatred of Nobunaga grew to such proportions that they disassociated themselves from the Koga-Yamabushi altogether, since these Ninja had former ties with Nobunaga.

This hatred was spawned by the act of Nobunaga having welcomed Christian missionaries. He did this, in part, to offset the Buddhist's powerful priesthood. Another reason for their hatred was Nobunaga's efforts to thwart the Buddhist's political influence in the country.

The Buddhist's enmity as well as the repeated attempts to assassinate him, led

Nobunaga, now Shogun (military dictator), to demolish the most powerful of the great Buddhist monasteries around Kyoto and capture the castle/monastery of Osaka. At the time, this castle was held by the "True Pure Land Buddhists". The Shogun's success broke the temporal power of the Buddhist sects.

Hoping to strengthen their alliance, the Iga-Ninja became converts of Buddhism and incorporated the religious teachings of certain sects into their art. This religious infusion caused Iga-Ninjutsu to undergo a transformation, making that style an almost occult practice. The Iga lured lost souls into their ranks by promising secret occult powers. This is evident in their "Mikkyo" teachings which are based on a belief in the power of black-magic, a compendium of religious beliefs with foundations in the esoteric tantric lore of India, Tibet and China.

The "Mikkyo" teachings still exist as an elaborate religion, the esoteric or tantric side of Buddhism. The Iga formalized these beliefs known as "Shingon Buddhism".

This occult belief of power generation through Mikkyo involves the combined use of "mantra" (sacred or charged words), "mandala" (schematic pictorial renderings of the structure of the universe, used for the direction of concentration), and "mudra" (energy-channeling hand postures) for the total concentration of energies and personalities. The bringing together of thought, specific words and hand gestures, in harmonious alignment is supposed to allow each quality to compliment the other. Ostensibly, the Iga professed this would give them supernatural strengths. This power is referred to as the "sanmitsu", the three secret components of "Mikkyo" spiritual power.

The Koga, on the other hand, retained their ritualized form of meditation called "Kuji-kiri" or "nine hands cutting." The Kuji-kiri was a hand positioning exercise that allowed the Ninja to collect his thoughts leaving him in a state of peace and free of want.

This allowed him to look back into the material world (where he knew he was grounded) from a heightened, enlightened perspective. This exercise gave the Ninja the ability to understand the intricate inner workings of all aspects of daily life (cause and effect) and find value in himself. In some cases, the intricate finger positions were merely a means of recognition for some factions.

The Iga "borrowed" the Kuji-kiri and assigned jumon mantra, charge words (rin, pyo, toh, sha, kai, jin, rets, sai, zen) to the accompaniment of weaving fingers. A finger was interlaced for each of the nine steps or "levels of power." Each jumon mantra was taught to the Iga student as having a particular personification of some cosmic aspect or supreme deity that assisted in the directing of occult power. This ancient belief is portrayed by Japanese film-makers with an actor dressed in Ninja garb, interweaving his fingers, mumbling words under his breath and "puff" he disappears in a cloud of smoke or shrinks to the size of a match-box to sneak by unsuspecting guards.

VI

Since the Koga clans still felt strongly tied to their Yamabushi forerunners, the idea of Buddhist persecution alarmed them. At the time that the Iga clans were adopting Buddhist principles and procedures, the Koga-Ninja offered their assistance to the Buddhist cause. They were, however, rejected by the Buddhists that were now under the Iga's influence.

This rejection supposedly came in the form of an execution of a Koga messenger, carrying a call for peace, strength through unity. Their unity in the past had protected Buddhist priests, who had taken refuge in the Koga mountains.

After a serious attempt by Iga-Ninja to kill Nobunaga, which resulted in the death of persons close to him, Nobunaga developed a burning hatred for the Iga. In response to this hatred he dispatched his army in the winter of 1581 to invade Iga province.

In less than a week, Nobunaga brought the area under his control. He was successful because the Koga Ninja had infiltrated the Iga ranks and could identify their members and diagram their spheres of influence. Koga and Iga fought each other with an absolute hatred. In the end, over 4,000 Iga Ninja were killed. Among the dead were members of those Koga sub-groups who had previously defected to the Iga. The Koga's planning and tactics resulted in taking casualties that numbered less than one hundred.

During their many battles, it was difficult for an outsider to determine who was winning, since both sides were in black from head to toe. However, the Iga traditionally wore their head and face covering different than the Koga. The Iga face coverings stopped

below the nose, their headpiece triangular in shape. The Koga Ninja covered their faces with full masks and armor.

Another result of the Iga's defeat was that their sacred scrolls, detailing the Iga's ranks and fighting manuals were captured intact and presented to Nobunaga. Today, these scrolls and manuals are in the possession of many Japanese museums. Among the scrolls captured were those that detailed the histories of the Koga sub-groups who betrayed the original fifty Koga family groups. The loss (or enemy possession) of these scrolls marks the very end of the existence of a particular ryu (root of, or family) of Ninjitsu.

Outlining the history, ranks and techniques of a ryu, these scrolls are so sacred to a particular clan that the mere presentation of the information they contain to an outsider is a crime punishable by death. The usual execution for such a crime was being boiled in water.

This kind of philosophy is still in keeping with those Ninja descendants who do not merely practice or play Ninjitsu, but even today, live it. The crime of looking at a scroll without a "need to know" is a serious offense, that is usually reviewed by a tribunal. The sentence is always stiff. In the ancient past, sometimes including death.

The reason for such harsh penalties is summed up by the folk tale of a Koga-Masuda Jonin (Ninja leader) who proclaimed to his torturers, "Yes, we are to be suspect, without loyalty except, to ourselves. Strength, safety, future and my revenge is in our anonymity." Unbeknownst to the torturer's his words proved true. According to legend, their entire families, cousins, aunts and uncles, and their animals were slaughtered, with no way to protect themselves."

In contrast, present day self proclaimed Iga descendants display ancient scrolls, many of which are merely copies of those on display in Museums throughout Japan. The motivation appears to be an eagerness to link themselves and their ryu to the past as a

means of obtaining public approval as to their authenticity. Some scrolls appear authentic, but are suspect when dating is requested or their origins are merely the find of a farmer, who sold the scrolls to the highest bidder or lends them out for photo sessions, on display in his own tiny off road Ninja museum. This can be likened to highway billboards advertising come see "the worlds biggest rattlesnake."

The Koga, in keeping with Ninja tradition and spiritual beliefs, see such public displays as a perversion, not in keeping with the teachings of Ninjitsu. The strength of a ryu of Ninjitsu comes from within and is therefore independent of the approval of outsiders, (something that would be in direct contrast to the teachings of Ninjitsu).

Another important point regarding the scrolls is that, due to their highly sensitive nature, portions contain double meanings and are encoded. Only a highly knowledgeable, expert-cryptographer or the scroll's "Soke" successor knows the manner in which any particular scroll should be interpreted. In the end, these scrolls can be manipulated by anyone to serve their own ends and fit their own meanings.

According to another interesting chronicle of battle, during Nobunaga's invasion of Iga province, Sandayu Momochi fought with courage and gallantry in combat. He was killed according to the text by a pistol shot to the head, as was Hanzo Hattori. Momochi was betrayed by his friend, a Koga double-agent.

As painful as the task was, Momochi's body was then taken and buried by the same man who murdered him. This Koga agent detailed, in this account, the fact that Momochi and Fujibayashi were one and the same person. The agent left behind specific details of how Momochi's body was smuggled from one of the many houses that was being used under one of his many personages (i.e. Fujibayashi).

Two of these houses are still standing. A third stronghold called Takiguchi-jo, was

razed by Nobunaga when rumors spread that Momochi was still alive. However, out of respect, several of his scrolls were kept for his widow.

Momochi was laid to rest in a family plot, on a hill, opposite one of his former homes. This hillside is found behind Nabari, about 15 miles south of Iga-Ueno. Apparently, this description of events was confirmed by a graves expert who located Momochi's resting place.

After the death of Momochi and Hattori, the next Koga siege was aimed at a strategic stronghold that was situated on a high hill overlooking the city of Iga-Ueno--the Hakuho (White Phoenix) castle. It was built by Lord Takatora Toda who gathered many Ronin (masterless Samurai) and cut-throats together and trained them with Iga-clan teachers. Toda did this under the auspices of the Hattori clan, believing he could strengthen his position and multiply his wealth.

Toda's notorious descendants narrowly escaped from their Koga-Yamabushi rivals and would serve as lineage for the Togakure-ryu clan, of which Gobei Toda was their 20th headmaster.

To the north of this castle was the Momochi/Fujibayashi sponsored Hikone stronghold. This fortress was situated on the east banks of Lake Biwa, now Shiga Prefecture.

Less than a year after the massacre of Iga Ninja along with their wives and children, the famed warlord Nobunaga was dead. He was killed in Kyoto at the hands of Mitsuhide Akechi, once Nobunaga's own staff colonel.

Old wives tales claim that Hattori, with several of his Iga-Ninja came to the rescue of one of Nobunaga's leading "generals"--Ieyasu Tokugawa. This was, of course, impossible, since Hattori was buried months earlier. But, even if he had survived, it is

unlikely that he would have come to the aid of the very man who had been instrumental in carrying out the attacks on the Buddhist strongholds at Osaka and Kyoto. Not to mention that as Nobunaga's general, Tokugawa (in that same year) oversaw and commanded the execution of Iga-Ninja, their wives and children. He also ordered the burning of their crops and farm-houses throughout Iga province.

The wives tale goes on to state that at this same time, Ieyasu Tokugawa was in the small town of Sakai, near Osaka. He was supposedly in danger of being attacked by Akechi's soldiers. This too, is more fantasy than fact, since Tokugawa is known to never have travelled without a large number of personal bodyguards, in addition to the forty-thousand troops, who were with him at all times and under his direct command.

Ieyasu Tokugawa not only shared Nobunaga's burning hatred of Iga-Ninja, but personally took it upon himself to execute several by burning them alive. He chronicled this in several letters to his field commanders and ordered them to follow his example. It can be seen, by this example, how the history of Ninjitsu has been corrupted by the few to serve special purposes. And, yet, little has been done to unravel the tangled web of deceptions that have long been held as history.

(pen & ink IGA ninja, triangle cap)

VII

After Nobunaga was assassinated at Honno in 1582, his vassal and most able commander, Toyotomi Hideyoshi completed the unification of Japan. He established an efficient countrywide administration for the modern Osaka area and introduced a monetary reform, as well as a land survey. In 1592, because of his low social status as a commoner, the son of a woodchopper, and according to Ninja descendants, educated in his youth by a Ninja, Hideyoshi did not qualify for the rank of Shogun. Instead, he was given the title of "Kampaku" (equivalent to civil chancellor) by the Emperor.

In an attempt to minimize the plots against him, Hideyoshi made extensive use of Ninja and established himself as an accomplished spymaster. Having followed the advice of a Jonin (Ninja leader) of the Koga Fukushima group, Hideyoshi assigned friendly and unfriendly daimyos to domains adjacent to one another. This tactic was continued by the seceding Tokugawa Shogun.

The Koga-clan's relationship with Hideyoshi grew poor. Many resigned their positions as his bodyguards when Hideyoshi began persecuting Christian missionaries. Hideyoshi charged that the missionaries were political agents of foreign powers, unaware that they had the potential to influence allies of unfriendly daimyos.

In 1587, Hideyoshi issued an edict banning the Christian activities. This was not strictly enforced until ten years later however, when he became annoyed by feuding between missionary groups. In reaction to this feuding, he ordered the execution of

several missionaries and Japanese converts. Many of these missionaries and converts found refuge among Koga-Ninja families, who hid them and cared for their needs, sometimes up to ten years. Later, when possible, these refugees were smuggled safely out of Japan. The Koga were not motivated to do this for a reason other than a sense of injustice to be corrected, but found it the means to indebt others to them, forming international alliances, even with the church, whose friends made it possible for the Ninja to secretly acquire guns.

In 1590, while still in the service of Hideyoshi, Koga agents were sent to Korea. During this time, Hideyoshi requested the Korean government give free passage to his army in order to attack China. The Koreans refused and Hideyoshi retaliated by dispatching an army of 150,000 soldiers, equipped with rifles. The Koga Ninja's invasion plans and maps, made it possible to take Korea by surprise. Pusan and Seoul fell within two weeks of one another. Koga Ninja then advised Hideyoshi to turn his attention to China and again make use of the surprise attack.

Instead, his ego bruised by the Korean's refusal to aid him, Hideyoshi sought the complete subjugation of the country. This allowed the Korean government to turn to the Chinese, who now had enough time to adequately reinforce their borders and send a well equipped army to oppose the Japanese. The Japanese were suppressed and peace negotiations were established. The Chinese acted as mediators.

The deteriorating moral climate and the unwillingness of Hideyoshi to enforce secret agreements made by himself and his predecessor (Nobunaga), scorned the powerful Koga clans. Learning of Hideyoshi's plans to re-invade and occupy Korea in 1597, the Koga Ninja sought to unseat and replace Hideyoshi with Ieyasu Tokugawa. They did this by giving the Korean general, Yin Sun Sin, Hideyoshi's battle plans and a list of his vulnerabilities. This same list, eventually led to the development of "Turtle Ships".

The Turtle Ships were perhaps the first iron-clad battle ships. On the advice of the Koga Ninja, the ships were outfitted with iron panels which covered the decks and galley. These panels protected the rowers inside. The ships were also equipped with a long, iron battering-ram that was shaped like a turtle's head (hence the name).

The Turtle Ships were impervious to any of the weapons that the Japanese had brought with them, thus the Japanese were defeated before they ever reached Korean shores.

The Turtle warships, or Ironclad Turtle, were called Kobukson. They were 2.16 meters high, 20.7 meters long, had a 34.4 meter high topmast, had 22 cannons lining its sides, and was able to emit a sulphurous smokescreen from its dragon's (turtle) head. The bottom was flat boards, the hull was covered by a double layer of iron, and the top surface was covered with iron spikes. The ship had ten oars on each side which enabled it to out run other ships of the time.

When Shogun Hideyoshi invaded Korea in 1592, the Korean government turned to Admiral Sun-Shin Yi, a brilliant strategist. Using the Turtle warships, Yi was able to fight off the Japanese invaders. The war ended in a truce, but with Korea politically divided. Admiral Yi's victory caused political jealousy and his detractors were able to get him thrown in jail. Yi remained in jail until Hideyoshi renewed his invasion in 1597.

The Japanese were ravaging the Korean navy when Yi was finally released and put back in charge of the twelve surviving warships. Yi was able to beat back the Japanese navy, having lost over half their ships. Yi was killed during in this battle. The Japanese would not attempt to invade Korea again until 1904.

(pen & ink of Turtle boat)

In 1598, the same year as this defeat, Hideyoshi died at the hands of a Koga Ninja agent. This agent, according to a Koga Ninja legend, was only nine years old. Because Hideyoshi's palace was lined with secret trap doors and various booby-traps, raiding from the outside was impossible. It was reasoned that if one could befriend someone intimately close to Hideyoshi, one could get by such obstacles and reach him.

This young Ninja befriended Hideyoshi's seven year old son, Hideyori. The offspring would play with the young Ninja. Eventually, the little Ninja learned where Hideyoshi slept and the plan was laid. The young Ninja, after being invited to sleep in the palace, climbed into the rafters and made his way to Hideyoshi. From above, using only a thread, the young Ninja decanted poison which slipped down the thread and into Hideyoshi's mouth. The boy returned to his palace bedroom and the next morning, Hideyoshi never awoke.

Following the internal chaos that was produced by Hideyoshi's death, Ieyasu Tokugawa was named as successor. The Kanto-based daimyo, was the most powerful and astute strategist among Hideyoshi's vassals, which is why (many believed) Ieyasu had worked with the Koga Ninja and engineered Hideyoshi's defeat in 1597 and death a year later.

Perhaps, the strongest reason Ieyasu was suspected of working with Koga Ninja was the memory of how, at the battle of Mikatagahara, Ieyasu suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Takeda forces and their cavalry strategy. At the battle he revealed Ninja

archery skills which, combined with his bold and Ninja like determination won him the reputation of "First Archer of the Kaido," and became one of the most outstanding achievements of his career.

Ieyasu was challenged by a coalition of daimyos, but defeated it decisively at Sekigahara in central Japan in 1600. Three years later, he was appointed Shogun and established the Bakufu (public works project in Edo, modern Tokyo).

The Tokugawa dynasty, with the superior help of the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja, remained supreme for the next 250 years. Their downfall came with the United States warships in 1853 and 1854.

Ieyasu's first and most pressing order of business was to consolidate power over the daimyos. First, he made himself untouchable by surrounding the Edo castle with undercover, Koga-Ninja who could arise in any emergency to protect him, while seeking out plots against him in the streets.

At the advice of the Koga-Ninja leaders, he never slept in the same bed-chamber twice in a row. He then surrounded himself (inside his suite) with Koga who had previously infiltrated Iga ranks. These former double agents were sure to recognize any Iga agents who were lurking about. This occasionally occurred when an unfriendly daimyo would call upon Ieyasu and Iga-Ninja would emerge as servants in their entourage.

For political control, Ieyasu took another lesson from his Koga-Ninja friends. He divided the lords into three categories. The first category was "Shimpan;" twenty-three lords who were natural allies because of their kinship through birth relation to the Tokugawa line. In Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu the ones who share this same distinction are known as "Jonin."

"Jonin" were Ninja leaders, allied to the various families by birth and the exodus to

Japan under Prince Regent Shotoku. They were responsible for policy and decision making.

The second category in the hierarchy was "Fudai," made up of one hundred forty-five hereditary lords who had been allies of Ieyasu before the battle of Sekigahara. This category correlates to the "Chunin" Ninja ranking.

The "Chunin" were men and women responsible for the training and the very discipline of the Ninja art as a whole. Each had his own sub-group and would decide who did what. If a large attack was in order, the Chunin would lead the attack.

"Tozama," Ieyasu's third category of daimyos, were those ninety-eight outer lords who had submitted to the Tokugawa power only after 1600. Ieyasu based this category on the "Genin" Ninja rank.

The "Genin" were Ninja operatives who made up the sub-groups. These men and women were the ancient counterparts to present day US Navy SEALs, and Ian Fleming's character James Bond, Agent 007.

These men and women with their extremely well-honed skills of combat and illusion were singly responsible for the reputation of the Ninja as "magicians of mayhem."

The most interesting safeguard of the entire hierarchy came as a result of the tumultuous beginnings of the clans. Because many of the front-line warriors were captured, or as in the case of Momochi/Fujibayashi where forty-nine Koga sub-groups betrayed their clan, the Genin never met nor would be allowed to know his or her Jonin's identity. In this way the Ninja's loyalty was always kept in check by the rank above him. Every operation and team was compartmentalized for security.

Ieyasu Tokugawa relied on the first two categories (Shimpan and Fudai) to check the "outer" daimyo's power, these being the richest and most powerful. Rewarded with high civil and military posts, the first two loyalist groups were placed in control of strategic areas and cities on the main route of communication (the Tokaido) and in those areas adjacent to the potentially troublesome domains in Kyushu and northern Honshu.

These secondary leaders made extensive use of Koga-Ninja for intelligence gathering and police work. This was a fairly simple task, since the Koga already possessed an extensive network of experienced agents throughout Japan. This allowed the Koga-Ninja to hunt down and eliminate Iga-Ninja who escaped after their defeat by the Koga and Nobunaga in 1581. The Iga were scattered to the four corners of the country, with the majority returning to their previous professions as cut-throats and robbers.

By this time, the Iga were unorganized and continually feuding amongst themselves, being devoid of any real kind of leadership.

The most famous of the Iga robbers was Goemon Ishikawa. He was one of Momochi's leading Chunin who was turned into a lovable rogue by fiction writers, the same way that the legend of Billy the Kid or other western outlaws and murderers were twisted into a cultural heroes.

The cold reality is that sometimes generations pass and fiction is stretched, a myth being kept alive by a people who no longer know where the truth ends and fantasy begins. As in the case of Ishikawa, he was thought of as a Japanese Robin Hood. However, at the time of his arrest he was less than popular with all the people. Ishikawa's fate was to be boiled alive, in public view, in a huge caldron of water and oil. His head was then severed from his body, transported to Iga Province and placed on display.

Ishikawa Goemon was a historical character that had been a common criminal. Romantic embellishment of his exploits have elevated him to the category of 'Ninja'. According to legend, Goemon was to have learned ninjutsu from the Iga-Ryu. Ishikawa Goemon took up the life of an outlaw at the age of 16 years, after robbing his master and killing three men. In 1595, he was captured and executed by being boiled in oil.

Of the loyalist daimyos, the branch families of the Tokugawa Shogunate held strong points in the three most strategic areas--the Kanto plains, the Nagoya region in central Japan and the Osaka region. Here, schools of Ninjitsu were established for the training of bodyguards, spies and the formal introduction of police tactics. After training, these Ninja were sent to Edo.

On the advice of his Koga-Ninja Jonin, Ieyasu installed a system of residence whereby daimyos were required to maintain homes and reside alternately in Edo and in their own fiefs. This residency law ("Sankin-kotai"), allowed the Koga-Ninja to study each daimyo and compile a personal dossier, for intelligence purposes on all the lords and their many associates.

During a daimyo's absence from Edo, they had to leave their families behind as hostages. As part of the Tokugawa surveillance, Koga-Ninja established checkpoints on all the important routes, for the purpose of (among other things) "looking for women leaving Edo and firearms entering Edo."

The Koga-Ninja knew that the requirement of double residency would be costly and weaken the daimyo's position, especially, since it called for a procession every other year. According to the history of Milton W. Meyer and the United States Library of Congress:Country Studies/Area Handbook Program, "as much as a quarter of the daimyos

annual income was spent on alternate residences. In addition, daimyos were obligated to make generous contributions to the Bakufu--sponsored public works projects the administrative authority which ruled the nation under the Tokugawa Shogun."

Moreover, the possibility of a coupe was minimized by edicts forbidding alliances between daimyos. This part of the law was kept in check by the Koga-Ninja.

Another edict (the "Buke Sho-Hatto") forbade daimyos to build or repair castles, or contact the imperial court without prior authorization. In order to stabilize the social base of the political order, a rigidly stratified hereditary/occupational class structure was instituted. This was fortified by status oriented Confucianism (Chinese morality, concerned with the development of harmony through man's realization of his social duties).

At the top of the structure were the Samurai. The Samurai's elite status was distinguished not only by his control of administration and military positions, but by the exclusive right of wearing two swords--Katana (long sword) and Wakizashi (short companion sword). Out of thirty million Japanese, the Samurai only constituted about five to seven percent of the population during the Tokugawa period.

(pen & ink of swords: long & short)

In the last decade of the 16th century, the Samurai underwent some change. Until that time many Samurai enjoyed the distinction of owning land, some being former peasants with small land-holdings. Joined by peasant recruits, in time of war they performed military duties. After the turn of the seventeenth century, the Samurai class became frozen as a hereditary, privileged, warrior-bureaucrat group whose membership was determined solely by birth. They were prohibited from intermarrying with other lower classes.

This effectively meant that peasants could no longer study the martial arts, they could no longer serve in the military. All members of the Samurai class became defined as warriors, but not all were now bureaucrats. The majority of Samurai lived in castle-towns where the daimyos, who constituted the very top layer of the class, maintained feudal authority. A minority of Samurai lived as landed aristocrats, but most received stipends of rice, which corresponded in amount to their official rank.

Despite the collective elitism, the Samurai were not socially equal. There was a great difference between upper and lower Samurai, the determination of which was measured by wealth, rank and income. Typically, lower ranking Samurai performed the less desirable duties as foot-soldiers, guards and clerks.

The peasantry had "second rank" status because they accounted for eighty percent of the nation's population and were the main contributors to the country's role as a major producer. Artisans and merchants were placed third and fourth in the cultural scheme of things. This placing was respectively done because of Confucian ethics. Both occupations were thought of as being economically unproductive. Still further below the status of

artisans, the most contemptible occupations were the shoemakers, tanners and butchers.

Left entirely outside the social ranking system were the Koga-Ninja who were in the exclusive employ (technically) of the Shogunate. Because of their origins, the Ninja were considered officially as separate citizens. In essence, they were a people without a country.

The decision to separate the Ninja socially, was based on the fact that their ancestors were brought to Japan by Shotoku. However, some Koga-Ninja (their identity as Ninja being secret to everyone except the Shogun) were awarded the title of Samurai so that they could carry out their tasks in a more efficient manner. Under secret orders of the various Tokugawa Shoguns several Samurai families underwent the rigors and indoctrination of Koga Ninjitsu. Among these Samurai families a handful would secretly abandon the Bushido code and take their place amongst the Koga Ninja community, forming their own Ninja sub-groups.

One such infamous sub-group was the Yagyu family whom, secretly Ninja, established the Yagyu school of swordsmanship in order to cultivate information. The Yagyu school, established in 1600, is still in existence today. Their Kenjitsu (sword-combat) style is the closest to the purest Ninja arts. In Japanese film making, the Yagyu family's secret identity is exploited in "The Seven Deadly Sins".

The Shogunate developed an effective centralized bureaucracy under a prime minister (a post that was often vacant) a council of state consisting of several senior counselors, a group of junior counselors, plus numerous judicial and administrative officers.

The social structure in all its complexity, was slowly becoming more and more dependent upon the Koga-Ninja. The Ninja were now acting as secret police, informing the Shogun of potential trouble spots, which included the bakufu bureaucracy, the daimyos and

the imperial court itself (in Kyoto) where the Emperor and the court nobility continued in their limited ceremonial functions financially dependent on the Shogunate.

The Koga-Ninja existed, more than ever as a faceless, secret society with powers both officially leading to the Shogun, as well as, their own, well-trained network. Their Iga rivals were hunted down to the point that only a handful of practitioners had escaped. The Iga's mainstay of survival became then farming, with Ninjitsu but a family legacy and hobby.

The secrecy of the Koga society was so complete--knowledge of their existence as an organization exclusively belonging to the Shogunate's inner sanctum--that martial arts historians such as Don Draeger presumed that they had all died out and ceased to exist. In reality, the "real golden age of Ninjitsu" was just beginning and would last up until 1912.

IX

During the Momoyama (1568-1603) and the Edo (1603-1868) periods, the Koga Yamabushi Ninja never forgot the ideals of a class struggle. They merely re-examined and redefined their tactics. First, the Koga-Ninja would strive to work within the system and infiltrate strategic administrative positions, or find a means of pressuring those who opposed them to submit to their control. Second, they would play upon the weaknesses in the class structure in order to rally the masses to act in their own behalf. Third, they would keep their own structure intact and alliances strong. They realized that the culmination of these tactics--their acquiring absolute, decisive power--would take place over generations.

To this end, the "three hundred year plan" was developed and chronicled in 1601,

when Jonin realized that someday there would come an opportunity to leave Japan for good and establish themselves in lands of equal or better opportunity.

Because Ninja often found themselves having to spend great deals of time and distance away from their culture, they had to take a solemn oath/covenant known as the "Ninja No Chigiri." This oath can be considered most appropriate in executing the three hundred year plan. To insure the plan's implementation and success meant that everything would have to change except, the spirit of how the Ninja saw themselves, summed up in the "Ninja No Chigiri," presented below:

NINJA NO CHIGIRI (Ninja Oath)

I shall vanish into the night, change my essence to wood, to stone, sink deep into the earth and pass through that which cannot be passed.

I shall fly like a bird and live in the sky, or I shall become a fish, breath beneath water.

I shall be murdered many times, but I shall not perish; I shall change my face and become invisible at will, able to walk amongst all living creatures without being seen.

I am Ninja, my father the heavens, my mother the earth.

I am Ninja, my castle is my body.

I am Ninja, my power is loyalty.

I am Ninja, my magic is in the way of training.

I am Ninja, my life and death is breathing when no breath can be

I am Ninja, my body always in control.

I am Ninja, my eyes see everything, they are the Sun and the Moon.

I am Ninja, my ears are sensitivity, they hear what is never spoken.

I am Ninja, my laws are self-reliance.

I am Ninja, my strength is adaptability.

I am Ninja, my secret is taking every opportunity with fullness.

I am Ninja, my best friend is myself.

I am Ninja, my enemy is carelessness.

I am Ninja, my protection is answering before questioned.

I am Ninja, my weapons are all that does and does not exist.

I am Ninja, my strategy, my way is without want or desire. I am nothing for myself and I am everything for myself.

My Way is Ninjitsu--I am Ninja.

Today, the oath still exists and is reportedly recited by Koga Ninja clan descendants as they come of age or are inducted into their clans. They are also awarded, at this time, their rank, title and ceremonial treasures. They are presented with their swords, and are given a personal present of something belonging to their mentor.

This master/mentor then gives the new clan member a name that is exclusively Ninja. This name is coded to the point that only another Koga Ninja, by secret knowledge, would know whether or not this was indeed a legitimate Ninja name. Thus, the bearer is identified as not a person merely knowledgeable, but an accepted integral part of the Koga clans.

This renaming ceremony is done in order to protect the real identities of clan members--their names committed to record so that in case of compromise the clan would never be in any kind of real danger.

This brings up an important point. Ninjitsu documents have very little practical

value as to legitimacy. Documents, it was realized, were easily forged. Coded scrolls can be twisted to any truth. Testimonies can be exaggerated or falsified. The truth, therefore of being Ninja is in the doing (achieving a spirit and skill sharper than the edge of a blade). This is the true doctrine of the Ninjitsu of the Koga Yamabushi.

One can also conclude that another reason why Koga-Ninja were not motivated to keep open or even cryptic records, was due to the memory of how easy it was after compromising Iga records, it allowed the Koga to hunt them down and eliminate their entire networks. The Iga's excellent record keeping their unfortunate undoing.

Today, the history of Koga clans are considerably chronicled in letters from one diamyo to another, in Dutch ship-logs, folk tales and in secret archives kept in the possession of Koga descendants. History, especially to the Koga-Ninja, is an integral part of the Ninja's training. But this history must be preserved in his mind, where it can never be compromised or misplaced. Where it can be readily used by oneself.

Another factor which strengthened the Koga clan's unity, were the Tokugawa edicts of behavior to be enforced. These were prescribed functions and standards of behavior for each class and social relationship. These edicts, strongly influenced by a national orthodoxy were compounded of Samurai and Confucian ideals, stressing, among other things absolute loyalty to the ruler and filial piety to the family head.

Confucian ethics suited well the-political needs of the Shogunate, given their emphasis on status distinction, paternalism and the importance of servant/diamyo relationships. Social inequality was also sanctioned by the criminal provisions for liability and punishment, which applied differently to each of the four classes.

For instance, a merchant who didn't consent to having his wife sleep with a diamyo could be killed by the diamyo and the diamyo would go free. On the other hand, should the

merchant even look at the daimyo's wife, or forget to bow (a symbol of his servitude) he could be imprisoned or have his head chopped off.

There was no equality or justice among the classes. The Samurai class was, as they were prior, exempt from legal liability. The Koga Ninja, however, rather than take direct action as in the past for reprisals, plotted and invented evidence and introduced this evidence as members of the secret police. Thus, an overly cruel Samurai found himself facing charges of treason, which resulted in his death at the hands of another Samurai. The end was the same, only the methods had changed.

Insuring social and political stability, a policy of national seclusion (which had been introduced in the early 7th century) was reintroduced. Beginning in 1600, British and Dutch traders began to appear in Japan in competition with the Portuguese and Spanish who were very well established. These newcomers, primarily Protestant, implied to the Shogun that the Spanish and Portuguese intended to conquer the country.

Ieyasu became distrustful of all westerners with the exception of an Englishman--Will Adams, who hailed from Gillingham in Kent. Adams had been found by Koga Ninja who after teaching him their ways, brought Adams before Ieyasu. He soon became the Shogun's most honored adviser and intelligence officer, awarded the title of Samurai. The modern novel "Shogun" is based upon his life. Adams also had the distinction of being the first Caucasian to study Ninjitsu. These facts were revealed in a letter by Captain Richard Cocks who, in 1613, arrived in Japan to establish a British trading station.

Ieyasu's successor ordered the expulsion or execution of almost all foreign missionaries.

More severe persecutions followed, triggering a rebellion in Nagasaki in 1638. The Bakufu's suppression of the revolt resulted in the destruction of the Christian community,

which numbered perhaps 300,000 and was centered in Kyushu. The rebellion allowed Koga Ninja to establish friendly and exclusive relations with foreigners. Contacts with the "outer" world were forbidden by the Shogunate and by 1640 all foreigners were expelled.

Afterwards, a handful of Dutch and a few Chinese were allowed to trade at Nagasaki under the most rigorous restrictions. This trading was overseen by the Koga Ninja who used the opportunity to establish ties with the Dutch in helping smuggle Christians out of Japan.

The Dutch also provided the Koga with technological advancements in the way of optics, arms and explosives, aiding the Koga in keeping their keen advantage over the Samurai. The isolation completely halted the flourishing foreign trade of the previous centuries and cut Japan off from the rest of the world. Except for the Koga Ninja, Japan remained secluded until the middle of the 19th century.

X

The Koga Ninja knew that the existence of a Samurai warrior class depended upon the existence (or constant threat) of a state of war. There are in Koga Ninjitsu, three inherent freedoms. The first is physical freedom, coming and going as one pleases. The second is social freedom, status not dependent on birth, sect or appearance. The third freedom (and the one that the Samurai didn't plan for) was economic freedom, having the ability and resources to raise your quality of life.

According to the prescripts of the "300 year plan" the Koga would disrupt the class status by insuring a peace where the warrior class would become defunct. Within this

atmosphere, the peasants and the merchants would flourish.

Once economic freedom was attained, the raising of the other classes to levels of equality would follow. This would happen, because the Samurai would be forced to make concessions in order to insure economic freedoms for themselves.

The prolonged domestic tranquillity during the Tokugawa period, had predictable results: the development of internal commerce, the growth of urban centers and the rise of (as predicted) the merchant class. Other results included, the construction of public roads and extensive public works projects, which served the objectives of the Shogunate.

These objectives were served, first by draining the financial resources of potentially dangerous daimyos, then by providing a road network for speedy communications and effective surveillance, and finally by promoting trade.

Rapid courier service was instituted. The couriers (Ninja) were credited with being able to cover 100 miles on foot in a day. A large market for goods and services developed in Osaka, Edo and provincial, fortified towns where Samurai were concentrated. The merchant class prospered and expanded, as did associations of craftsmen and tradesmen. Urban growth stimulated the gradual change over from a rice to a money economy. Credit instruments developed. Rice exchanges were established in Osaka and Edo, the financial centers of the nation.

Koga Ninja were in Edo, officially placed in the capacity of public, uniformed police. Therefore, the Ninja society constituted the first official police force of Japan. The "Jitte," an iron baton with a hook to trap a sword, this Ninja weapon once used to disarm a swordsman became a symbol of authority. Today, it is still awarded to police in Japan. The Jitte, to a Japanese police officer, being equivalent to the badge and "billy-club" of a New York, Irish cop.

(pen & ink of Jitte)

As the merchants and artisans grew richer and, therefore more powerful, the peasants and ruling class experienced a paralleled decline in their own economic status. The peasants suffered because of the irregular taxation's of the daimyos and the declining value of rice as the money economy expanded. The money economy tended to undermine the rigidly compartmentalized social structure and the basis for sociopolitical stability.

Deprived of military employment in the long Tokugawa peace, some Samurai became bureaucrats and scholars. Others, wandered the country, aimlessly, in a deep depression. The lucky ones were offered the unproductive and insulting role as retainers on reduced incomes. As the early simplicity of warrior life gave way to urban refinements, the economic needs of the Samurai slowly grew while his income diminished.

Many Samurai turned to robbery, easily caught and/or killed by the Koga-Ninja acting as secret police. Many Samurai disobeyed the Tokugawa edicts and intermarried with the families of merchants or prosperous peasants, while still others were reduced to entering occupations formerly reserved for the lower classes.

Gradually, the Ninja's "300 year plan" was clearly taking root. The indebtedness of the Samurai, the daimyos and the Shogun themselves increased and the wealth of the country passed into the hands of the merchant class.

In fact, by 1850 the Shogunate was virtually bankrupt. The aristocracy of birth was

still at the top of the social order, but status no longer corresponded to individual economic power.

In addition, as economic stresses were intensified, the frequency of discrepancies concerning the Samurai's observance of the official standards of behavior (code of loyalty--Bushido) increased. More and more Samurai were being picked up by the Koga police as traitors to the edicts. Ritual suicides became a common occurrence.

The Tokugawa period also marked the surging of new intellectual currents. The Buddhist clergy were the leaders of scholarly endeavors. Samurai contributed greatly through their compilation of historical works, to laying the foundations for historiography upon which, (said noted historian John Whitney Hall) "modern historical research first depended."

It is important to note that the descendants of Koga-Yamabushi Ninja were the secret arm of the Shogunate. Otensibly, to even mention their name was a direct violation of the Shogun's "trust...a secret"-- an unwritten edict of treason, which could be violated simply by uttering the word "Ninja." In such a case, a Samurai could lose face and ritual suicide would be the only honorable solution.

Samurai, therefore guarded their words and little mention exists of the Koga-Ninja as secret police. Most historical data, subject to controversy, seemingly, comes in the form of letters from one diamyo to another. Some of these letters actually bear the seal of the imperial court and are directions and orders that were to be passed on to the diamyo's Ninja contacts. The letters, authenticated, translated and are still in the possession of the Defense Intelligence Agency in their archives. Supposedly, they were made available in the development of the U.S. Army's Handbook on Japan under William Evans-Smith, Director of Foreign Area Studies, The American University, Washington D.C.

The most accurate and detailed accounts, as were previously stated, of the Koga Yamabushi Ninja are also in the form of Ship Logs and Journal entries by Dutch sea captains.

In 1720, (according to one of these Dutch chronicles) perceiving the potential benefit to be derived from western science, the Shogunate relaxed its restrictions on western learning (yo'gaku) or Dutch learning (ran'gaku)--terms applied interchangeably with the study of western science, medicine and languages.

Interest in military science increased dramatically, but only much later, when Japan was faced with foreign threat.

The study of western sciences had little political impact, being confined to a very small number of government appointed officials and scholars. The "secret police" (Koga Ninja) were no longer secret and were officially a part of this group.

The early Tokugawa measures to establish educational facilities in 1630, eventually led to the establishment of a Confucian College, later to be known as the "Shoheiko." Following suit, by the middle of the nineteenth century about 270 schools were functioning. Their job was to school the Samurai, for whom there had been 1,500 private academies set up in the larger towns.

Commoners were educated in about 11,200 schools (terakoya), which were often attached to local Buddhist temples. They also received education in 600 officially sponsored schools (gogaku). Male literacy reached an unheard of 40 to 50%, female literacy about 15%.

Over 17,000 schools of various kinds were in operation--many were administered and staffed by Koga Ninja who were backing further and further into the shadows of Japanese history. At this time, the Shogun's favorite expression when discussing his secret

police was to refer to them never again as Ninja but as his "Kagemusha," (shadow warriors). Thus, the title Shadow Warrior and Ninja became synonymous.

XI

In 1853, Japan's vulnerability is exposed by the arrival of U.S. warships. Commodore Perry, who commanded the U.S. armada, demanded (among other things) facilities for trade. The anxiety of the Bakufu was heightened by the memory of the shocking defeat and humiliation of the Chinese by the British Naval forces in the Opium War (1839-42). In this war, China was forced to relinquish certain sovereign rights to foreigners.

The Koga Ninja knew that if change were to come to Japan, (and their "300 year plan" realized) that "the direct impetus shall come not from within, but from without."

This is the apparent motive Koga Ninja guarded and valued secret trade with westerners. By this time, the majority of the clan members were re-named and settling in the area of Nagasaki, because of the influx of western trade. Many, it is believed, left Japan and later returned with the help of the Dutch. One folk story goes that a Koga Ninja left Japan and returned thirty years later, filled with tales of wondrous adventures. These adventures took him to an imperial palace of a European noble. Here, he freed his ship captain's brother, who was wrongfully imprisoned there, because of his tax indebtedness to the noble. It is factually substantiated, and chronicled in ships logs, that trading companies employed and sailed with Japanese.

Unable to resist the "Black Ships" by force, (the name given to the ships of the

invading armada) the Bakufu agreed to their demands after taking the unprecedented step of consulting both the imperial court and the leading daimyos.

In 1854, the first of Japan's modern-day treaties provided for extensive commercial concessions, giving a virtual monopoly on external trade to foreigners. The Japanese were forced to grant extraterritorial status to foreign nationals, thus exempting them from Japanese legal jurisdiction.

These treaties outraged most Samurai who were, for the first time, getting what they had dished out in the way of elitism. Especially angered were the powerful southwestern domains including Satsuma and Choshu. A young Samurai seized political initiative and organized a revolt on the outer fiefs. This revolt would soon end with the "shadow warrior" capture of Yoshida Shoin, a Choshu scholar calling for unity under imperial rule. This was a threat to the Shogunate. Shoin also called for a restoration of Japan's integrity by bringing the entire far east under Japan's hegemony. Shoin became the patron saint of Japanese ultra-nationalistic chauvinism.

The Koga Ninja secretly allied themselves with troops of Choshu and with those of Satsuma in 1866, who helped defeat the last (15th) of the Tokugawa Shoguns in 1868. On January 3rd of that same year, the Emperor Matsuhito was empowered. He took the reigning title of "Meiji" (enlightened rule).

In 1869, with a secret Ninja escort, the imperial government was moved to Edo and renamed Tokyo (meaning eastern capital).

A secret alliance existed between the imperial court and Koga Ninja whom, presently, claim that the Ninja had informed the Emperors, over ten generations of their "300 year plan." They agreed to ally themselves to the court if the Emperors would consent to the idea of "doing away with the evil customs of the past." In exchange, they would

protect the Emperors from the Shogunate and help restore the Emperor and his doctrine to its rightful position.

Under this basic philosophy, the Emperor proclaimed to bring about unity of "all classes, high and low, to give commoners freedom of choice in occupation and to establish deliberative assemblies."

The process of breaking away from the centuries-old feudal lifestyle was not without difficulties. During the two ensuing decades, the implementation of an essential framework for an effective centralized government and a powerful military establishment (in addition to the foundations for a modern economy) took place. However, the Ninja's role as secret police was becoming less and less needed. Becoming obsolete also was the common purpose which drove men into the ranks of Ninjitsu (i.e. the class struggle). Their goal was now seemingly realized.

In 1809, the daimyos were persuaded (by threat of assassination) to surrender their lands to the throne. Many were allowed to stay on as governors of their respective domains however, two years later, rumored on the advice of Koga Ninja leaders, the fiefs were abolished and reconstituted into seventy-two prefectures.

But then, for no apparent reason the prefectures were reduced to only forty three, a number which corresponded exactly to the number of practicing Koga Ninja (Jonin) families. The daimyos were replaced as governors and political appointees (some Jonin Koga Ninja) ruled in their places.

In keeping with one of the many secret treaties with the Ninja, in 1876 the Samurai lost their special privilege of wearing two swords. The Ninja forefathers knew that this would be the last tangible symbol of the Samurai's elite status. The Tokugawa's four-class social status was no longer a reality. Samurai, however would not surrender their swords

without an honorable defeat. For this reason, the Ninja jitte became especially revered at this time by the police--many of whom were now, once Samurai. With jitte in hand, several policemen would surround a Samurai. As the Samurai lashed out, his blade would be caught by the jitte's swordguard. Meanwhile, other police would beat the Samurai into submission. Afterwards, the Samurai did not "lose face" and could continue his life with some sense of honor.

This strategy suggests that Ninja were not the bloodthirsty fiends they have been made out to be, in contrast to the unbendingly strict Samurai policemen who would commonly gang up on those less fortunate Samurai. They would kill or maim because these other Samurai, who would not yield to their command, were viewed as a challenge of their honor.

In 1877, after opposition to the Meiji reform measures, came a group of conservative ex-Samurai who rallied around Saigo Takamori. Saigo led a major uprising against the government but was easily defeated by the new conscript army of 40,000 men using modern weapons. This defeat took place under the guidance of many Koga Ninja who were easily absorbed into the military due to their knowledge of modern weapons and tactics, achieved through earlier trading relations with the Dutch.

Between 1878 and 1882 two developments speeded up the creation of an all-embracing Japanese secret service. The establishment of a Japanese Army General Staff in 1878 led to the formation of an Army Intelligence Service. Three years later, Ninja masters were employed to form a counter intelligence organization called "Kempei tai."

Disenchanted, in 1881 several low ranking Ninja formed the "Genyosha" (Black Ocean Society) which took its name from the strip of water called "Genkai nada" which separates Kyushu from mainland Korea. This was a secret society founded by Kotaro

Hiraoka to expand Japanese influence overseas and to acquire intelligence from China, Korea, Manchuria and to a lesser extent, Russia.

The struggle for equality continued but did not gain results until the 1890's, after certain legal standards and procedures were adopted, at western insistence. First, Britain in 1894, and all the other powers by 1899, surrendered their extraterritorial privileges. This was due to Japan's demonstration of modern military capabilities.

In 1894, borrowing the Ninja tactics of the Yoshitsune-ryu school, Japan moved against China in response to China's claim over sovereignty over Korea. This resulted in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and 1895.

In the 1895 treaty of Shimonoseki, in the wake of Japan's quick victory, China recognized Korea's independence. Japan acquired Taiwan, the Picadores Islands (where Koga Ninja descendants set up schools to establish naval tactics), and the Liao-dong Peninsula in Southern Manchuria.

Japan's ambitions did not go unchallenged, however. Russia took measures to prevent Japan from taking control of Liao-dong. Japan entered into negotiations with Russia over their respective positions and rights in Manchuria and Korea. This action bought the Japanese time to dispatch their secret forces (Koga Ninja) to map and plan a military alternative.

Again, utilizing Yoshitsune's tactics which outlined the surprise attack, and without warning, the Japanese Navy bombarded the superior and greater numbered Russian fleet at Port Arthur. Two days later, Japan declared war and dispatched its army.

Many Koga Ninja filled their ranks, including Senzo "Tiger" Tanaka, who was only 16 years old at the time. He was credited with killing several high-ranking Russian officers, as well as, a nobleman and representative of the Czar of Russia.

These Ninja secretly became an elite arm of the Japanese military establishment. Many organized themselves into raiding parties that would penetrate deep behind Russian lines, some into Russia itself. Later, they would form a fraternity which would be the foundation of the infamous "Kokuryukai" (Black Dragon Society).

The terror and havoc these Ninja generated had never before been known to the Russian Imperial Court. According to some accounts, a 19 year old mistress to the Czar was beheaded while they slept, side by side. Allegedly, this took place several years after the war, in response to several of the Czar's off handed and reckless comments, vocalizing his intent to, in his lifetime, avenge mother Russia with a surprise attack against Japan. His lover's head, all according to legend, was laid at the foot of the bed of the Czar, with an oriental crest, surrounded by nine diamonds over a map of Japan

The crest of nine diamonds is the symbol associated with the Masuda group. This author's mentor, Senzo Tanaka, was one of the leading members of the Masuda group/cell, whose roots lead back to Koga-Ninja. Many believe that Tanaka-sama himself killed the Czar's mistress, since he actually had ceremonial audience with the Emperor for his bravery and skill, displayed during the Japanese-Russo War.

Tanaka-sama, also a great Kumite (barehanded fighting) champion, became revered by many of the people of Nagasaki in awe of his strength, speed and the effortless way he carried himself -- like a giant cat, that he was nicknamed: "Tiger."

(pen & ink of Crest of Nine Diamonds)

When his fighting days were over, Tanaka-sama made it a point to disappear from sight. It is believed Tanaka-sama became the personal hatchetman to Ryohei Uchida, founder of the Black Dragon Society. Tanaka-sama reportedly returned to Russia disguised as a Mongol, in order to organize a Black Dragon spy ring. Another belief is that Tanaka-sama was joined by another Ninja, Toshitsuga Takamatsu, an Iga-clan descendent of the Tokagure-ryu style. Takamatsu was a direct descendent of the Tokatora Toda line, who established the Hakuho castle in the 1500's.

Together, the two traveled through China, perfecting their art. Takamatsu would stay in China approximately eight years. Before returning to Japan, Tanaka-sama made Takamatsu swear a solemn oath not to divulge Tanaka-sama's whereabouts, or that the two had traveled together, at all.

Takamatsu's reasons for traveling with Tanaka-sama, besides friendship, was protection and to fulfill a secret mission, that was speculated to be, spying on the Chinese defenses for the anticipated invasion by Japan. Tanaka-sama revealed it was to escape revenge. While in Japan, Takamatsu had been wounded in a sword duel with a Samurai that had left him blind in one eye. Nonetheless, whether achieved through association or coincidence, Takamatsu was nick-named "The Playful Tiger."

Tanaka-sama would stay in China for several more years, returning not to his home in Nagasaki but to Masuda, where he would teach swordsmanship and grade school. Tanaka-sama's roots, also lay in the Yagyu school of Japan, known for teaching both subjects to children.

However, Tanaka-sama's solitude would be broken by Major-General Masatake Nakajima, the Intelligence Chief of the Japanese General Staff. Tanaka-sama was then

recruited as an advisor, as were many other Ninja descendants, for the purposes of spying activities in Manchuria and Russia. To complicate matters, the "Tiger's" uncle, Kunishige Tanaka (later General Tanaka) would become Head of Military Intelligence. Senzo Tanaka soon found himself an aide to Major-General Matsuo Itami, who succeeded General Tanaka in 1922. Senzo Tanaka seemed destined for a brilliant intelligence career, however, he was forced to resign because of outspoken political and personal convictions. With Senzo Tanaka's resignation, and his insider knowledge of Japanese expansionism, came the risk of assassination. Several attempts were made on his life by militarists from Satsuma, which forced him to take refuge amongst his vast Ninja family. He was only able to come out of hiding, when friends of his uncle intervened on his behalf. Afterwards, the experience was one of many good reasons Tanaka-sama would rarely allow himself to be photographed. Typical behavior of those members of the Ninja's secret societies, during and after World War II.

XII

By 1912 a party system was in existence and the class struggle goals a reality. There was little reason for entering Ninja sub-groups. The Ninja ranks slowly diminished. The Ninja teachings were preserved only by those devout families who still knew their roots and saw their place, as a people without a country.

By 1939, there were but a handful of Ninja families still practicing and preserving the teachings of the art. Government sponsored Ninja schools, were either replaced by Samurai military doctrine or martial sports--Kendo or Judo, as an example. The Ninja

families would still prosper from their ancient ties with various European trading and shipping companies.

In 1937, many Ninja families witnessed first-hand the brutality of the Japanese military in Manchuria.. It so alarmed these descendants, that many formed secret protection pacts with their old friends, the Dutch traders. Specifically, the Ninja warned the Dutch of Japanese expansionism--of the massacres and atrocities that Japan was committing during its involvement in China and Mongolia. These atrocities included mass rapes, pillaging and executions of thousands of Chinese citizens, old men, women and children.

When Japan signed the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance in September of 1940, the majority of Ninja were so alarmed by the fascist, racist propaganda being promoted by Japan's new ally (the Nazi's), that many of the Koga Ninja credit it for being “the shove” that moved them in the direction of spying for the Dutch, British and later, for the Americans. During Doolittles air-raid on Tokyo, many Ninja are said to have lit fires to mark key industrial targets. However, not every Ninja (descendant) worked against the Japanese.

One Ninja, loyal to the Japanese Nationalists, on December 7, 1941, drove a Chinese laundry truck through rows of military aircraft, “clipping their tails,” amidst the attack on Pearl Harbor. The strategy and tactics employed during this surprise attack is Yoshisune-ryu Ninja strategy and tactics by origin with one variation, because it was carried out by the modern Samurai, Japanese military, they failed to execute the planned third attack (air wave) that should have been launched, followed by an invasion force.

At this time, many Koga Ninja re-grouped with other members and took to the mountains. Here they hid, avoiding conscription into the armed forces. Some volunteered, only to sabotage efforts at every opportunity. Little is known about what happened during

the war. However, immediately after the war, the Koga Ninja's involvement became such a sensitive issue, that to this today, no one is willing to openly discuss the subject. Possibly, because to publicly discuss those known Ninja agents would broaden tensions and jeopardize peaceful relations with the Japanese; or more likely, that these same “traitorous” families still continue to provide intelligence services. [To this extent, it is a common belief within the current circles of Ninja (descendants), that one of these families not only has continued to work for American intelligence (CIA), but is partially, if not, exclusively, responsible for the industrial spying and theft of the Japanese researched and developed radar absorbing paint technology, presently, utilized by the United States Air Force on their Top Secret Stealth Fighters and Stealth Bombers].

In exchange for services rendered, the American occupational forces promised to protect those collaborators (Ninja families) from Japanese Nationalists, that sought to destroy "traitors". However, the Koga clans, viewed themselves as a people of deep convictions, concern for humanity and justice for all, not the privileged few.

From 1945 to 1952 the Koga families helped with the demilitarization and democratization of Japan by (SCAP) Supreme Commander For The Allied Powers, Douglas A. McArthur. They did this on a purely consultory basis--their identities as former allied spies never to be revealed.

Years later, Tanaka's identity was adapted by Ian Fleming in the famous James Bond books. Fleming, once a high ranking member of the British secret service, would borrow Tanaka's name for his book, "You Only Live Twice." Here too, he would rekindle the legend of the Ninja.

Mr. Fleming was known for basing his characters on real-life people. For example, “M” was in reality inspired by Admiral Menzies, Fleming’s superior officer and the

Director of Her Majesty's Secret Service, MI5. Major Boothroyd was created out of a letter written by a fan by the same name. This "fan" was criticizing Bond's usage of a .25 calibre automatic. Fleming then made him a member of Bond's books as "Q", Major Boothroyd, weapons and covert gadget expert. Even the name James Bond is borrowed from one of Fleming's favorite authors.

Tanaka-sama was remembered by Fleming, perhaps because the "Tiger" was kept as a house guest of the British Secret Service. He took refuge with them, co-incidentally, only after the murders of several Japanese militarists, who had stood accused of having wrongfully imprisoned and tortured his family members in 1942, then living in Nagasaki.

In the late 1940's, Tanaka-sama was said to be a wild man. He ran up so many personal vendettas that he was becoming far more dangerous than a political embarrassment. Fortunately, he was given a new identity by American intelligence forces and left Japan, as did many of his clan, for parts of the United States. Many of those who made the exodus changed their family names. Some to the extent that all traces of Japanese lineage were erased. For example, prior to World War II, many former members of the Bisen group of Ninjitsu took Chinese names, since each was required to travel to the United States through China

Perhaps one of the greatest ironies the war would produce would be at the hands of the Koga's allies, the American military establishment. The majority of Ninja clan members were killed during the Atomic bombing of Nagasaki, their centuries old capitol of Ninjitsu, the priceless archives of Koga Ninja completely destroyed. Those that did survive were divided between those who wished to stay (but could not for fear of post-war reprisal), and those who enthusiastically could not wait to leave Japan. Those that did remain, soon were entrenched in organized crime – Yakuza. Many, were allegedly, responsible for creating

within the Yamaguchi-gumi Yakuza, a Japanese version of Lepke's Murder Inc.

Because of the huge Nisei population along the American west coast and Hawaii, many Koga Ninja descendants headed for these areas. Many of these exoduses were sponsored by family members and distant relatives, while others, like Tanaka-sama, were brought to the United States by the influential Sego family. This family owned many prosperous nurseries and gardening services.

In his boyhood, Tanaka-sama had befriended one of the Sego's who eventually became an accomplished Aikido master. Tanaka was later retained and became content to accept the position of a simple Japanese gardener. Regardless of these facts, many still insist that he was secretly brought over to quell troubles with Chinese Tong (organized crime) members, who were extorting and attacking the Japanese community in San Francisco.

Tanaka-sama did stop in that area first, and it is known that Yakuza activities were organized, that a rash of Tong members, specifically, their hatchetmen, disappeared or were found murdered, execution style, within a months time. The borders between Japan and Chinatown, coincidentally, were finalized around the same time of his migration from San Francisco to the California Southland, adding to the notion.

In 1955, Tanaka-sama, living under a new name provided to him by the American intelligence services, settled in Los Angeles, California. He remarried (about seven years later) but never had any children. The last of forty generations, Tanaka-sama decided to share his family's guarded, ancient secrets. He started with his nephews (who would later return to Japan), but they seemed unappreciative to him. He accused his nephews of embracing the art as a means to spend time, rather than a way of life.

Tanaka-sama by merely being related by blood, kept contact with his Koga Ninja clan, the majority of whom were now financially prospering throughout the world, comfortable, abandoning any notions of continuing their martial legacy.

Frustrated, Tanaka-sama, decided to pick the worst example of an occidental martial artist he could find. He began a trek that brought him to many tournaments. At one of these he was quietly pleased by a young 12 year old who, although coming in dead last, stubbornly refused to accept defeat. The boy never shed a tear even when he found himself facing beatings by 21 year old black belts.

The boy was invited to train with Tanaka-sama at his home. Tanaka-sama hoped that the sight of an occidental, an outsider, would embarrass his nephews and force them to find family pride in mastering the family style. At first, the plan worked, but the grueling intensity of the training did not drive the boy away, who never was really expected to stay.

For two years the boy trained along-side the nephews, eventually, passing them by in grade with his relentless drive and hunger to learn. He overcame the demanding exercises, both physical and mental. For those two years, the boy did not know the name of the art he was perfecting. He only knew that it worked, which was enough to sustain him. In exchange for lessons, the boy did odd jobs, cleaning and helping Tanaka-sama, who was then in his eighties.

How many of the secrets this boy was entrusted with of the Koga-Yamabushi Masuda clan, is speculative at best. He was, however, schooled in the entire history of the art to the point that he could at one point name the masters who developed and implemented single techniques, as well as why and how each came about. When the boy reached sixteen years of age, he was officially given a Ninja name, making him feel part of a long honorable tradition and legacy. A legacy, a fine mixture composed of folk legend

and half truths. So fascinating that this boy, would be taken to preserving it before it too, forever, fades away and is lost to the fragmented and evolving secret society of the Ninja that once flourished throughout Japan.

Today, in Japan, under Yoshiaki Hatsumi, the Iga teachings, flourish. Hatsumi's tutelage came under Toshitsuga Takamatsu. Hatsumi now is the 34th headmaster of the Iga Tokagure-ryu system of Ninjitsu. Other Iga clans and styles of Ninjitsu also exist. However, as to their claims of legitimacy one can only conclude that the proof is never in the paper, family tree or written testimony. The proof, according to ancient Ninja logic, "*is in the doing.*"

Among the many differences of the Koga and Iga styles of ninjitsu is the existence of two separate ranking systems:

KOGA Alliance & KOGA-YAMABUSHI

JONIN

OYABUN\GIJITSUSHA--(engineer):

Responsible for taking the clan forward. Traditionally, his identity is always guarded. His thumbs or all of his fingers are cut off in a ceremony to demonstrate his dependency and dedication to the clan. The Mafia version of a Don or Godfather.

SHIDOSHI --

This title has been revered by Koga-Ninja for centuries as one who is the *Master's Master* -- a person who has perfected the *four ways* and, by doing so is no longer living (for

himself). He now lives for the clan.

Loosely translated: Shi (four), Do (ways of doing), Shi (corpse), or "the four ways of the dead." The first "Shi" is representative of those four ideals a Koga-Ninja must strive to perfect in oneself, which are:

- ***Benevolence:*** to-one's fellow man, that one should not wait to be called upon to give of oneself, and to give without expectation of return. To have mercy for even one's worst enemy; to form an alliance, the desired outcome.
- ***Courage:*** to risk all when called upon;
- ***Valor:*** to meet one's "Kirk" (obligations) in the face of overwhelming odds;
- ***Wisdom:*** the most important element of a Ninja life, to always seek it out.

For, knowledge is a tool of power, and one always acts out of wisdom, not the preceding three, all-emotional states.

The last "hi" is intentionally foreign to Japanese and is taken from the Chinese meaning for "corpse," to symbolically link the old with the new & the Shidoshi title to Ninjitsu's Chinese roots in the Sun Tzu.

CHUNIN

SHIHAN --

Master grade, his position was that of a Ninja sub-group or cell (Ryu) leader.

GENIN

KAMARAI, RAPPA, SUPPA, ONMITSU (and in the Edo Era) SHINOBI --

Ninja operatives

SENSEI --

"One who has gone before" or "teacher". He is, depending on rank, a minor or low Chunin or high Genin (operative) rank.

IGA/TOKAGURE-RYU

JONIN

GRANDMASTER\HEADMASTER—

Supreme Authority, "Soke" (inheriting successor) of that particular ryu.

CHUNIN

SHIHAN —

Master, responsible for teaching and discipline.

GENIN

*****SHIDOSHI —**

This title is different from that of the Koga^氏s. According to one of Hatsumi's official representatives in the United States, it means "teacher of the warrior ways of enlightenment."

***Mr. Steven Hayes, Hatsumi's official US representative, stated in Kick Magazine, June 1981, the title, Shidoshi, was made up exclusively for him by Hatsumi. The Iga\Togakure System also represents it is the only "real" Ninja system to survive of the 1700 different Ninja systems. Self-evident of the bitter rivalry that still continues, even today.

SHIDOSHI HO —

This is one who assists the Shidoshi, with very limited powers. Often awarded as a means of honoring one (i.e. an honorary blackbelt to someone who has never studied but has contributed to a particular school or ryu or changed over from traditional martial arts to be “Ninjutsu.”).

THE NINJA INFLUENCE ON JAPAN'S MAIN EVENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

THE SCROLL OF A NATION

Rooted in a mythical age, when the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu commanded her divine grandson to rule a land of "luxuriant rice fields." Japan's history is that of a people absorbed in their singular, divine destiny, yet profoundly influenced by other cultures.

c.30,000 BC.

Earliest datable traces of human habitation; land bridges suggest linkage of Japan with the Asian mainland.

10,000 BC.

Hunters and followers of the Jomon Culture thrive in small settlements. This is evidenced by hand-formed pottery, decorated with cord patterns. These are among the earliest known in the world.

c.300

Metal working, the pottery wheel and irrigated rice cultivation spread from Korea. This new found culture called the "Yojoi" replaces the Jomon; clan alliances and units grow in power.

552

Buddhism arrives through far-reaching contacts with China and Korea. This is a faith that is just one example of cultural borrowing. Another is the use of Chinese characters for writing.

604

Influenced by Buddhism and Humanistic Confucianism, Prince Shotoku, regent to the Empress Suiko, drafts a document calling for ethical government and establishes a two hundred year tradition of scholarly missions to China. With the discovery of "Sun Tzu" (The Book Of War), Prince Shotoku imports and surrounds himself with the "greatest accumulation of warrior ways in the history of Japan." A private secret society, only loyal to Shotoku, is formed to help settle civil strife.

645

Aiming for a central government based on the Chinese model, the Taika Reform abolishes most private land ownership. Secret treaties with Shotoku's secret society (and their descendants) help influence the emperor to grant plots to peasants during their lifetime.

He also taxes the harvest.

701

The Taiko Code creates administrative offices and a legal system. Overly harsh judgments and the weakening of secret alliances cause the majority of the 50 family descendants of the Shotoku Secret Society, to return to the mountains and fortify

themselves.

710

The Imperial Court moves to the newly built city of Nara, Japan's first permanent capital and urban center.

Chinese inspired art and architecture flourish in imposing Buddhist temples, while monasteries increase in number in the provinces. The fifty families, called "Yamabushi," cultivate their skills and resist overly harsh tax collectors.

The legend of Kobiashi spreads to the Imperial Court.

712

Japan's first written history, the Kojiki, is followed by the nation's first anthology of poems, the Collection of Myriad Leaves.

794

The Imperial Court establishes Hoian-kyo (Kyoto)'s "capital of peace and tranquillity." Secret pacts are made with the Yamabushi (fifty families) to teach their warrior ways in exchange for exemption from taxation.

Violence breaks out between them and their Genji
rivals.

The Mt. Kurama--Hachi-ryu school is established.

758

The Fujiwara family secures ruling power as regents to the Imperial throne. They achieve this goal with the help of the Yamashiro (Ninja) Yamabushi family support. The Fujiwara clan secretly funds the Yoshitsune-ryu school of Ninjitsu. In exchange for this funding, top students are recruited and allowed to make up a secret contingency cell loyal only to the royal family.

ca.1000

The Heian Court bequeaths Japan a legacy of artistic refinement. Courtiers devote themselves to cultural exercises of calligraphy, poetry, perfecting etiquette and nuances of dress. The land is captured by Lady Murasaki Shikibu in the "Tale of Genji," the world's first novel. The Ninja forerunners have surpassed the warrior tactics of the Samurai by leaps and bounds. They begin to align themselves with the Taira family.

1156

As the bureaucracy weakens through neglect and attacks by Ninja who are protesting unfair laws and Buddhist persecution, three military classes emerge to manage provincial affairs. A struggle for court control pits the Minamoto family against the ruling Taira family. The Taira hold sway from 1160 to 1180 when Kaseda Nina, Urakawa Ninja and the Koga Ishibashiyama Ninja sub-group withdraw their secret support of the Taira and realign themselves with the Minamoto clan.

1185

The Minamoto clan receives, from their Ninja, strategic intelligence, which allows them to triumph after a five year war. Kamakura is established as the first military government. Power passes from the court aristocracy to the warrior class. Minamoto Yoritomo is named by the emperor as Japan's first Shogun (military ruler in 1192. Yoritomo's vassals serve as provincial administrator. The term "Ninja" is coined (someone whose spirit and skills are sharper than the edge of a sword).

1191

Zen Buddhism is introduced from China and embraced by the warrior class. The Zen concept of beauty through

restraint finds expression in No theater, rock gardens, ink paintings and flower arranging. Zen priests import tea as a stimulant to meditation and create the ritual tea service called "Cha-no-yu" as a ceremony of spiritual renewal. Meanwhile, the warrior class is becoming dependent upon Ninja. Over 25 different Ninja schools have sprung up. The Ninja groups and sub-groups now exceed several hundred.

1194

The Koga and Iga schism occurs. The Iga, made up of the Oe, Momochi and Hattori clans break away from the original fifty Ninja-Yamabushi families. While the Koga cling to an ideological class struggle, the Iga hire themselves out to the highest bidder. The Koga see this as a serious betrayal and sides are drawn in an internal struggle that is present to this day.

1274 & 1281

Kublai Kahn fails to conquer Japan when "Kamakazi" (Divine Wind) Typhoon storms destroy his invasion fleet. Blood is spilled between Koga and Iga. The majority of Koga-Ninja Jonin (leaders) set into motion plans to contain the Oe, Momochi, and Hattori clans

and their followers, who have established themselves in Iga Province. Thus, these followers would come to be known as Iga and all others, by alliance, Koga (named after the Koga Ninja group, the largest and most powerful of the fifty Ninja groups).

1336

A power struggle results in two imperial capitals for sixty years, and a new Shogunate. This Shogunate, the Ashikage, lasts until 1573. The Koga align themselves to the north, the Iga to the south.

1467

The Onion War, a civil conflict, devastates Kyoto and heralds nearly a century of chronic civil strife. Iga Ninja are overpowered by Koga Ninja who battle at Sachet. The Koga credit their victory to Mashie Kusunoki, who founded the Kusunoki-ryu school of Ninjitsu and the first school of espionage in Japan..

1543

Western commerce and Christianity arrive with

Portuguese traders. The Ninja acquire guns and make use of optics by trading with the Portuguese on an almost exclusive basis.

1549

St. Francis Xavier launches his Jesuit mission. Ties are established in several port townships to solidify the Portuguese/Ninja relationship. These ties help to break down language and cultural obstacles. Forty-Nine Koga sub-groups defect to Iga under the pretense of the reward of great wealth and power. The Iga receive support of the Buddhists, who feel threatened by the Koga ties with Christianity.

1560

Military leader, Oda Nobunaga works to unify Japan, and enters into a secret series of treaties and transferences of wealth with Koga Ninja.

1581

Nobunaga invades Iga province (spearheaded by Koga Ninja). Over 4,000 Iga Ninja are killed, their network compromised and leadership practically eliminated.

1582

Nobunaga is assassinated. Toyotomi Hideyoshi rules in his place. He ostracizes Koga-Ninja by not keeping secret agreements made by Nobunaga. He is soon replaced by Ieyasu Tokugawa, who secretly makes a pact with the Koga-Ninja, forming an alliance in 1598. This alliance plays a decisive role in crushing Ieyasu's opposition in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600.

1603

Ieyasu becomes Shogun and establishes the Tokugawa Shogunate. He makes the Koga-Ninja retainers. Later they will become his "Kagemusha" (shadow warriors) or secret police. Ninja Jonin reorganize and begin their "300 year plan" for securing rights for all classes.

1604

Seventh commemorative celebration at the Hokoku Shrine in honor of Hideyoshi. There, Koga-Ninja are first ordered to hunt down all Iga descendants.

1606

Construction of the Hikone Castle by the Li clan takes place. This is done because of the Iga/Koga Ninja

Hikone fortress, a stronghold seized by Ieyasu under
Nobunaga at great cost in human lives.

1608

Ikeda Terumasa rebuilds Himeji Castle and is given
secret police powers by the Shogun. A Koga-Ninja
school and a new line is established at the castle.

1609

Permission is given to the Dutch to trade. Koga-Ninja
help Merchants win favor and establish a trading factory
at Hirado.

1610

Koga-Ninja advise Ieyasu on the building and
fortification of Nagoya Castle. He grants several Ninja
families Samurai status. Several set up schools of
Japanese fencing.

1611

Koga-Ninja are assigned to spy on Portuguese who
resume trade.

1612

Prohibition of Christianity occurs. Permission for Chinese from Ming to trade at Nagasaki (capitol of Koga-Ninja network) is granted.

1613

Expulsion of missionaries and other Christians begins. Fearing further persecution, they establish ties, through traders, with Koga-Ninja.

1614

Motsumoto Castle is completed. The Osaka Winter Campaign takes place. Koga Ninja help persecuted Christians escape to Manila and Macao. Among these refugees is Takayama Ukon, who had been targeted for public execution.

1615

Osaka Summer Campaign takes place. Koga Ninja enter battle, which leads to the downfall of the Toyotomi Clan. Ieyasu, with his Kagemusha (Koga Ninja) is now uncontested in supremacy. He promulgates the Laws of Military Houses (Buke Sho-hatto). Ieyasu expands the duties and powers of the Koga Ninja.

1616

The Bakufu restricts foreign trade to Nagasaki and Hirado (Ninja strongholds). Ieyasu dies.

1617

Christian persecution is renewed. Dutch (through Ninja ties) are allowed to trade.

1618

Nagasaki and Hirado (under Ninja supervision) is opened to trade with British.

1619

Sixty Christians are burned at the stake in Kyoto; others flee with help of Koga-Ninja in Nagasaki.

1620

A new school of Ninjitsu is set up with the construction of Katsura Rikyu. This school will spawn the Suminaga clan of Ninjitsu.

1622

Koga Ninja expose a plot against the Shogun. Kimura Sebastian and fifty-four others are executed. There is

great martyrdom in Nagasaki.

1623

The British close their factory in Hirado and secretly escape with the aid of Koga-Ninja. Two traders are caught and burned at the stake by Samurai. They are joined by fifty Christians, who share the same fate in Edo.

1624

Hidetoda, now at the peak of his power as Shogun, orders all relations broken with the Spanish. This operation is to be overseen by the Koga-Ninja (Shadow Warriors). Kan'ei-ji Temple is built.

1625

Koga-Ninja capture six Iga-Ninja and oversee Ni No Maru quarters built in Ni jo Castle. Production of Hi gi pottery begins.

1628

More Christians are persecuted in Nagasaki. Koga Ninja almost expose their secret actions when 12

Christians are captured and tortured. The Koga kill the torturers before the information of their secret hiding places and escape routes can be compromised.

1632

Careful search for remaining Christians begins. Koga-Ninja intensify their secret efforts to hide the Christians. Good fortune shines on them when the Shogun places the Koga Ninja in full charge of the search.

1634

Dejima is built at Nagasaki and all foreigners are forced to live there. Koga Ninja of Nagasaki intensify their relations with foreigners. Secret pacts are made in spite of efforts to force Christians to recant by trampling on the crucifix.

1635

All foreign trading ships are restricted to Nagasaki a third Sakoku (isolation) edict. All Japanese overseas shipping and travel is prohibited, except for the

Shogun's Kagemusha "Shadow Warriors" (Koga-Ninja).

The Sankie-Kotai system is institutionalized.

1636

Kan'ei tsuho coins are minted. Famine occurs throughout Japan. Koga-Ninja ban together sharing food. Their alliances and ranks are expanding rapidly.

Their sub-groups are nearly doubled.

1637

The Shinabara Rebellion is suppressed. The Shogun's dependency on his Koga Yamabushi Ninja is intensified.

1639

The Shogunate orders all daimyos to ban Christianity in their domains. The Koga-Ninja are empowered to secretly execute all who may oppose them or those who may be obstacles to the Shogun's decree. The Portuguese are expelled.

1640

Other Europeans are expelled. Portuguese envoys from Macao are beheaded. Foreigners are hidden by

Fukushima Ninja at Matsumae.

1641

Dutch area moved from Hirado to Dejima in Nagasaki.
They are protected by the Koga-Ninja who are now in
positions of authority.

1642

There is famine throughout Japan. Many Dutch
intermarry with Koga-Ninja Some secretly leave Japan.

1647

Portuguese ship visits Nagasaki and demands trade.
Shogun refuses, but secretly allows his Shadow
Warriors to trade.

1649

Koga-Ninja capture and kill the last of the Hattori Clan
of the Iga. Promulgation of the Laws Of Ordinances of
Keian (Keian Ofuregaki) takes place.

1650

Koga-Ninja save Mitsutomo Tokugawa from
assassination. He was to be killed during the popular
pilgrimage to Ige-Jingu Shrine (Okagemain). The

chronology of Japanese History, Honcho tsugan, is
completed.

1651

There is a revolt led by Yiu Shosetsu (Keian Jiken).
Osetsu is killed. Twelve Bisen-Ninja are executed by
Masuda Jonin (Ninja leaders) for plotting against the
Tokugawa family of Owari.

1654

Fukushima Ninja escort Zen priest, Ingen when he arrives in
Nagasaki from Ming. He founds Obaku sect of Zen.

1655

In the beginning of the construction of Shugakurn
Rikyu, Ninja and their families are empowered with
"special privileges" by the Shogunate.

1657

There is a terrible fire in Edo (Great Fire of Meireki).
Koga-Ninja help restore order and organize builders for
reconstruction. Many historical Ninja artifacts are lost to
the blaze.

1658

Execution of six hundred and thirty Christians takes place on the orders of Omura Suminaga. Ninja help many converts by establishing hiding places in Kaseda.

1659

Ingen receives protection by Ninja after threats of violence during the building of the Mampuku-ji Temple.

1660

This year marks the rise of the Mito school of historians under the leadership of Tokugawa Mitsukuni. This is done to promote learning and Shinto studies.

1668

On the advice of the Koga-Ninja, there is reconstruction of the Ashikage school.

1673

Desiring to keep trade with foreigners exclusively theirs, Ninja plot and execute secret actions which result in failure for Great Britain to renew trade.

1678

There is a great earthquake in Edo. Ninja healing techniques win favor from many who are healed by

Ninja/Kunochi, who set up make-shift hospitals. A Ninja healer is assigned to the Shogun at his request.

1680

Ninja expose a corrupt administration enjoying great freedom in social mores.

1684

A new calendar (Jokyoreki) is adopted. The Haiku anthology, Fuyu no hi (A Winter Day), by Matsuo Basho is completed. Koga-Ninja stop the assassination plot of the Iga Fukuhara and Takamatsu clans against Tsunanari Tokugawa.

1687

Shogun Tsunayoshi's "Dog Decrees" (laws prohibiting the killing of animals) are enacted. Koga track down Iga-Ninja in Dewa. Twelve Iga families are slain, preventing a plot to bomb the Imperial Palace.

1690

E. Kaempfer comes to Japan as the physician to the Dejima factory. Koga-Ninja place poison on the claws of eight domesticated hawks. These hawks are trained to attack horsemen.

1694

The Kamo festival is restored. Eight overly cruel Samurai are killed by poisoned-clawed, Ninja hawks.

1701

Ogata Korin is given the title of Hokkyo. Asano Takumi No Kami strikes at Kia Kozukenosuke in Edo Castle. Yoshimichi Tokugawa dispatches Ninja to protect Mito family members in Edo.

1702

Clan chronology, Hankanfu by Arai Hakuseki, sees completion. A revised map of all Japan is completed. Ninja set up their own cross-country communication network with use of signal fires.

1707

Mt. Fuji erupts. Nara-Ninja clans absorb homeless clan members, victims of eruption.

1709

The Dog Decrees are abolished. There is reaction against the laxity of the Tsumayoshi regime. Financial

reforms are attempted. Bisen and Harima Ninja capture sixty bandits preying upon travelers to Osaka by way of Kyoto.

1714

There is widespread famine. Gold and silver is re-coined (Shotoku kingin). Ninja befriend traders at Nagasaki, feeding them out of huge food stockpiles.

1715

Completion of Dai Nihonshi (Great History of Japan) is commenced by Mitsukuni Mito. There is promulgation of new laws governing Nagasaki. Ninja enjoy wealth as a result of their long time relationship with traders.

1716

Ninja are instrumental in the relaxation of edicts against Western learning. Attempts are made to strengthen national administration (this marks beginning of Kyoho reform).

1721

Regulation of prices charged by rice dealers in Osaka is begun. Ninja expose price manipulation by two daimyos. This results in the daimyo's disgrace and

death.

1734

Permission is given for daimyos to dispatch troops to suppress riots. Many of the riots are started by Ninja who use the confusion to free imprisoned Christians and peasants who could not pay taxes.

1738

Ninja oversee a census taken in every province.

1739

Russian ships make several appearances off Mutsu and Awa; Ninja are dispatched to investigate. The army is put at their disposal, as rumors of invasion reach the Shogun.

1742

There are great floods in the Kinki and Kanto regions. Many Koga archives are destroyed. The majority of the remaining Ninja records are moved to Nagasaki.

1750

Another census is taken in every province. Ninja become fearful of information gathering techniques.

They choose to participate directly.

1755

There is a great famine in the Ou region Many Ninja feed starving peasants who, in turn, swear allegiance. Ninja become all-powerful in the region. Sub-groups in the area double in number and rank.

1756

To keep prices low, restrictions on rice dealers (to prevent a monopoly) are enforced by Ninja.

1765

Nishiki-e form of color print is developed by Suzuki Harunobu. Ninja assassinate two powerful bandit leaders at Sakaiminato.

1767

This marks the beginning of the golden age of Liberal Administrator, Tanuma Okitsugu. Kurashiki-Ninja and Wakayama-Ninja (Koga groups) feud.

1771

First anatomical dissection of a cadaver is performed by Maeno yotaku and others at the execution of a criminal at Kotsukappara. Wakayama clan of Ninja gathers support of Fukushima and Bisen clans to defeat Kurashiki Ninja.

1774

There is a publication of a text on anatomy. Western learning is encouraged. Ninja training is expanded to include western medicine, through the Kaitai Shinsho.

1782

Marks the beginning of great famine of Tenmei era. Ninja make Nagasaki the official capital of Ninja Jonin. Many clan members of separate sub-groups migrate to Nagasaki.

1783

Shiba Kokan begins to produce etchings. Matsudaira Sadanoby attempts economic and social reforms. Ninja cultivate the growing feelings against the Shogunate.

1786

Tanuma Okitsugu is dismissed. Ninja vote to lead and organize peasants in revolt. The Jonin of Koga alliance veto the decision, based on the “300 year plan.”

1788

There is a great fire in Kyoto. Ninja set fire to Ni jo Castle, to destroy all evidence and lists of suspected Ninja families no longer loyal to the Shogunate.

1790

Despite prohibition against foreign trade studies, Ninja continue studying western science.

1791

American and Russian ships visit Japan, but are driven away. Before they leave, they are contacted by Nagasaki Ninja. Decrees against foreign trade are re-issued.

1792

Hayashi Shibeï is captured by Ninja, and prosecuted for a military work, Kaikoku Heidan.

1794

There is a great fire in Edo. Ninja Jonin move their

command of operations to Nagasaki and Masuda.

1797

American ship Eliza calls at Nagasaki and is allowed to trade. Several Ninja sign aboard this ship. They will not return until ten years later.

1800

Ninja, Ino Tadataka, begins topological and cartographic survey of Ezo (Ou region and Hokkaido).

1801

Ninja, Ino Tadataka, ordered to survey Japan's coastline.

1803

American ships again visit Nagasaki, but are refused trade by the Shogunate. Ninja establish secret relations and trade for guns and cannons.

1804

Resanov, a Russian diplomat, arrives at Nagasaki, and through Ninja contacts an audience with the Shogunate is arranged. Rezanov's demands for trade are rejected.

1805

Ninja are named to manage the Kanto area.

1808

Discovery of the Mamiya Straits is made. Takeda Izumo, Ninja Jonin to the Shogun Ienari is murdered by an archer. Reprisals are taken and after the conspirators are found, over sixty famous samurai are assassinated. This action, taken as reprisals, is supported by the Shogun.

1811

Russian Naval officer, V. Golovnin and others are taken prisoner by Ninja and held in Matsumae (modern Hakodate).

1812

Takataya Kahei, a Bakufu trader, is arrested by Russians. Ninja are sent to rescue him.

1814

British ship arrives at Nagasaki, Sir Stamford Raffles sends the ship to trade secretly with Ninja. He attempts

to bypass the Ninja and directly contact the Shogun, but is stopped by Bisen Ninja. The ship is forced to sail empty handed, and with half rations, leaving Ninja more than displeased with Raffle's ambitions.

1818

Englishman Gordon arrives at Uraga for trade but is officially rebuffed by the Shogunate. Two Ninja cells are ordered to assassinate Gordon by leading diamyos. They refuse and face death sentences. Ninja Jonin and the Shogun intervene on the Ninja's behalf.

1819

Completion of the "Dai-Nihon enkaikochi-zenzu" (coastal map of Japan) takes place.

1823

P.F. Von Siebold comes to Nagasaki, finding protection through Ninja Jonin.

1825

Edict is made to expel all foreign ships. First Kabuki play is performed. Secret Ninja Jonin, Ikku, is honored by the Shogun, Inerai.

1831

Ninja help restore order after peasant uprisings in
Choshu province.

1834

Mitzuno Tadakuni, envoy to Ninja Jonin, becomes an
elder in Shogun's council. School of Minokama Ninjitsu
is founded. The school stresses the study of
meteorology and archery.

1838

The Shogunate runs into financial troubles. There is
another peasant uprising in Sado. The "300 Year Plan"
is taking effect and gaining momentum as journalized
by Joann Ninja leader, Narrate.

1839

Watanabe Kazan, Takano Choei and others are
punished for demand opening of Japan to foreign
commerce (Bansha No Goku). Several Samurai
supporters are assassinated. The conspirators are
revealed by the Shogun's Ninja and disgraced.

1840

Ninja oversee census taken in every province.

1841

Ninja inspire Mizuno Tadaki to begin an attempt at economic and political reform (Tempo reforms).

1842

Permission is given to supply water and fuel to foreign ships. Ninja are ordered to oversee the operation.

1844

French ship visits Ryukyus for trade. Two Ninja sign aboard and return twelve years later. One will establish the Nakamura school of Ninjitsu, that emphasizes seamanship and the raiding of sailing vessels.

1846

American warships come to Uruga and demand trade.

Ninja clans ban together at the port, unaware that secret agreements had been in place years earlier between ship Captains and Jonin Ninja at Nagasaki.

1853

Commodore Matthew Perry arrives with Black Ships off of Uruga. Russian Admiral Putyatin arrives in

Nagasaki. Both secretly confer with sympathetic merchants (Jonin Ninja). Putyatin is rescued from assassin by Kumano Ninja.

1856

Townsend Harris comes to Shimoda as consul-general of United States. Ninja/Kunoichi act as interpreter. Ninja are assigned to guard Harris.

1858

Treaty of Amity and Commerce with USA is made. Ninja help suppress Sonno-joi (revere the emperor, expel the barbarian) movement. Ninja meet with the emperor and secure secret treaties in exchange for services in a powerplay against the Shogunate. Ninja help foreigners settle in Kobe, under their protection.

1859

Kanagawa, Nagasaki and Hakodate are opened to foreign trade with Russia, France, Britain, Holland and America. Yoshida Shoin and others are captured and executed by Ninja.

1860

Naosuke is assassinated by 17 Samurai of Mito fief (Sakuradamongai no hen). Ninja strengthen relations with foreigners and the emperor.

1864

Allied fleets of four countries fire on Shimonoseki in Chosu province (War of Shimonoseki). Chosu clan submits to Shogunate. Secret agreements are made between Chosu clan and Ninja.

1866

Marks the conclusion of military alliance between Satsuma and Choshu clans. Secret agreements to abolish feudalism are reached between the emperor and Ninja leaders, who set into motion the final phase of the "300 Year Plan."

1867

Imperial rule replaces the Shogunate. Armed conflict breaks out between Shogunate troops and loyalists. Feudalism is abolished. Ninja are dispatched by the Emperor to organize loyalists.

1868

Edo is renamed Tokyo. Battle of Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto takes place. Ninja spies reveal information which changes the course of battle. Emperor Meiji, brought to power in the Meiji Restoration, oversees an era of rapid modernization from the new capital of Tokyo. Ninja are instrumental in education reform. The emperor honors Ninja treaties which call for an Imperial edict abolishing the Samurai-class status.

1877

The last and greatest Samurai revolt occurs. Knowledge of modern warfare by Ninja leads to the bloody and humiliating defeat of the Samurai. Two -thousand Ninja (with guns and canon) hold off forty-thousand Samurai until loyalists can organize and reinforce strategic strongholds.

1885

Prime Minister and cabinet are appointed in this year.
Ninja Chunin (sub-leaders) are appointed to key military
positions.

1889

A constitution is drafted. Ninja ranks are diminished.
Twenty Koga-Ninja schools close.

1890

The Diet, a parliament, is elected. A majority of
Koga-Ninja move to Nagasaki and Kobe. Trading
becomes their main or only source of income.

1894

Tactics from the Yoshitsune-ryu school of Ninjitsu are
adopted by the military. Many Ninja families, holding
key military positions, influence the success of the
Sino-Japanese War (1894 to-1895).

1901

Kokuryukai (Black Dragon Society) is founded by Ninja
descendants and associates, now renamed the
Genyosha.

1905

Most major Ninja clans are unable to fill their ranks.
Many leave Japan, while others make use of their talents in the military. The Japanese-Russo War (1904-1905) ends. Japan wins overseas territory which signals Japan's emergence as a world power. Senzo Tanaka, of Jonin Ninja family, is given audience by the Emperor. He becomes a public hero in Nagasaki.

1910

Ninja clans are reduced to a handful after Jonin leaders confer and agree that the “300 Year Plan” (laid down in 1600) is a success. The caste system is abolished. Communication between the Emperor and his Ninja allies is suspended with the interference of militarists from Satsuma.

1912

Ninja training is reserved as a family discipline. All formal schools are closed.

1926

Emperor Hirohito resigns.

1931

The Depression fuels the rise of nationalistic military leaders, who occupy Manchuria and assassinate the Prime Minister. Many Ninja families resign their positions in the military; others, through trading ties at Nagasaki and Yokohama agree to spy against Japan for the British and Dutch.

1937

Japan goes to war with China. Many Ninja families are separated as the men take refuge in the mountains, escaping conscription into the army.

1941

Yoshitsune-ryu tactics are employed at Pearl Harbor in surprise attacks against American warships. However, the tactics are altered and will be the military's greatest mistake. British arrange Ninja contacts for American intelligence sources.

1945

Japan surrenders after U.S. drops A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With the destruction of the

capital of Koga-Ninjitsu (Nagasaki), lost forever are
ancient scrolls and irreplaceable artifacts. Few
Koga-Ninja survive.

1952

Allied forces leave Japan. Many Ninja families, no
longer protected by the foreign influence, fear reprisals.
Arrangements are made for them to leave Japan. Few
will return. Many give up great wealth, their family
having established Zaibutsu, the great trading firms still
in existence at Yokohama.

1971

Shihan Ronald Duncan forms the first Ninjitsu Dojo
(training Hall) since 1912, in Japan.

1975

Koga title “Shidoshi” is awarded to Mr. Frank W. Dux.,
who achieves recognition as the World Heavyweight
Champion (1975-1980) in Full-Contact Kumite (fighting
without benefit of gloves or any other protective gear).
He breaks four I.F.A.A. (International Fighting Arts
Association) world records in a single tournament.

1979

The Ninja craze begins world wide. Starting with a comic book series, entitled: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

1980

Frank Dux retires undefeated as World Heavyweight Champion, and re-establishes public schooling of Ninjitsu on an international basis. He forms the first Western system of Ninjitsu (Dux-Ryu). He becomes a driving force behind public awareness of Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu.

Grandmaster Hatsumi and his "Shidoshi" Mr. Steven Hayes, spark public awareness throughout the martial arts world of Ninjutsu/ Iga Tokagure lineage of the Ninja.

1986

Dux trains Jean Claude Van Damme for the movie "*Bloodsport*," which is based upon Dux winning his Kumite Championship. Ninja kuji-kiri and training techniques, revealed.

1998

Common knowledge: "Ninja," conjures up black hooded comic book heroes and villains. In reality, Ninja descendants are the foundation for numerous Asian organized crime syndicates, intelligence organizations and secret "industrial" societies. Only the name has changed. Their secret, unveiled by their "doing."

THE BAN SEN SHU KAI

These original works were compiled in the summer of 1676 by Yosuyoshi Fujibayashi. Fujibayashi was one of the main aliases employed by the Momochi clan, one of the two most influential Iga families. The name Fujibayashi was taken by those Momochi family/group members operating and living in Koga Province, employing those Koga-Ninja sub-groups who had, for profit or Buddhist alliances, had defected to the Iga.

Literally translated as *"Ten Thousand Rivers Collect in the Sea,"* the Ban Sen Shu Kai is a collection of knowledge of Iga and Koga family systems. Unfortunately, it was not until recently that the true ownership of these documents was discovered.

The Ban Sen Shu Kai manuscripts were not handed down from one generation to another by

members of a particular Ninja Ryu/clan, as has been alleged. These documents were found buried in urns by a farmer and are the possessions of the Katsui O'Hara family.

The major obstacle facing modern Ninjitsu's unification, acceptance and growth in the martial arts community, lay at the hands of self seeking opportunist's with a commercial ax to grind. The Ban Sen Shu Kai, amongst other "*publicly displayed*" historical documents and artifacts, have often been used to imply, genuine historical lineage and authenticity through a ploy of photographic association -- perceived as being the "real thing" because they are seen surrounded by such rich historical artifacts. The Ban Sen Shu Kai, being the most notable. The Ban Sen Shu Kai's historical writings reveal it as logical and systematic. When compared to the Koga Masuda group manuscripts (dated twenty years prior), such as the "*Koga Hichi No Kage*" (The Seven Shadows of Koga), the comparison reveals that the tactics and strategies of the Koga appear to be more advanced in technique. No matter the differences between the two schools, the historical importance of this 17th Century encyclopedia of Ninjitsu is priceless.

"Jo"

Volume one, "Jo"-- contains an introduction, historical examples, an index of contents, a question and answer section, plus the principle philosophy of the Iga-Ninja. The Iga-Ninja is admonished to remember there can be no dissension amongst the ranks if a Ninja leader is to defeat the many with the few. One spy or counteracting agent can cause the downfall of an entire army or Ninja network. (A lesson the Iga learned at the hands of the Koga operating and employing Mashige Kusunoki's counter-intelligence tactics; tactics which led to the Iga's ultimate downfall at the hands of the Koga and Nobunaga Ode in 1581).

“SHO SHIN”

Volume two, "Sho Shin"--discusses the sincerity, morality and intention necessary for being Ninja. This volume gave the Iga- Ninja recruit a reason, a purpose that would sustain him through acts of treachery, deception, theft and fraud, not to mention cold blooded and premeditated murder, regardless of age or sex. The first step in the Iga "Ninjutsu" education is to clear up any mental or spiritual cloudiness. (Especially, necessary since the Iga hired themselves out as assassins to the highest bidder).

“SHO CHI”

Volume three, "Sho Chi"--reveals the methods on which the Iga managed their organization and ways of successfully employing Ninja. This text also describes countermeasures for preventing enemy agents from compromising the Ninja leaders own organization.

“YO NIN”

Volume four, "Yo Nin"--is an understanding of "In" and "Yo" (Yin and Yang in Chinese) crucial in the Iga-Ninja system, promoting Shingen Buddhism. It primarily deals with the "white" or "bright" side of Iga-Ninjutsu. The bright side represents dynamic and positive power of the intellect and creative thinking. The Ninja can obtain the intelligence information one needs without becoming physically

involved in the spying activity. He directly or indirectly employs others to gain the knowledge for him. The Ninja then knows how to handle the enemy aided by the knowledge of the enemies strength's or weaknesses. Methods of knowing the enemy's intentions without taking an active part in combat action include:

- ***"TO NYU HEN"***

Continuous observation through agents placed during peacetime

- ***"ME KIKI HEN"***

Observation of enemy geographical layout.

- ***"KIN NYU HEN"***

Location of agents placed during wartime

- ***"MI WAKE HEN"***

Detailed observation of enemy force numbers, capabilities, along with other details of enemy strength.

- ***"KAN MI HEN"***

Observation of the enemies strategy and positioning.

"IN NIN"

Volumes five, six and seven, deal with the "black" or "dark" side of the Ninja's power. *They are manuals dealing with:*

- stealth
- deception
- confusion tactics

The Ninja could bring the enemy under his control. Employing methods that the Samurai (bound by Bushido) considered to be dishonorable, contemptible, and cowardly. The volumes include unique methods of the Iga-Ninja's fighting system (both individual and collective). The techniques themselves are often presented in cryptic or poetic wordings to prevent the uninitiated from picking up the manuscript and learning the secrets. The *Ban Sen Shu Kai's* techniques of "*In Nin*" (darkness), are actually code words and jargon in catalog form that some may argue serve as reminders for qualified Ninja. Only by studying with legitimate teachers can the student come to know the true meaning of the technique descriptions. Since the material is coded, anyone who protests that he is the only legitimate practitioner and the only one who can interpret the information, therefore can twist the meanings/jargon to serve their own ends. By examining one passage where the Ninja is reminded to rely on "murasame no jitsu" or the "art of the village rain," the passage is so vague one can twist its meaning to mean anything or serve anyone. This is an example, why authorities rely on the proof to being Ninja "is in the doing" and not dependent upon

the possession of paper scrolls.

"TEN JI"

Volume eight , covers the Ninja's methods for interpreting and evaluating conditions in the environment. The volume includes weather forecasting, tide tables, moon phases, land navigation based on determination of direction and location by observing the stars. This volume is based on generations of experience with such systems, such as:

"GO GYO SETSU"

(Theory of the five elements)

"IN YO DO"

(Taoism)

"YI"

(The *I CHING*, Book of Changes).

Included and coded is the explanation that the information presented is derived from scientific observation and folk lore, as well as, Tibetan and Chinese systems of divination.

"NIN"

Volume nine, a description of Iga-Ninja gear, begins in this volume and continues on into the tenth volume, which is labeled: *"Ka Ki"*:

"TO KI"

Covers the climbing gear of Ninjitsu, including a wide variety of

equipment used to get Ninja safely up and down castle walls, trees, cliffs, and the sides of ships.

"SUI KI"

Covers water gear of Ninjitsu. The equipment described provides numerous methods for crossing over or moving under bodies of water. This is based largely on the practical advice by pirates.

"KA KI"

Called "*The tail*," rather than Volume 10, is done perhaps in keeping with the Iga-Ninja superstitions and reliance on the number 9 as a means of inspiration and guidance for enlightenment. This manuscript is broken up into three works of importance:

- a collection of tools for the purpose of breaking into locked or fortified buildings, castles, and storage areas.
Equipment for picking locks, boring through or under walls and moving doors are described.
- formulas and their preparation and use of explosives, smoke bombs
- sleeping potions, medicines and poisons.

The explicit directions are written in the Iga regional dialect of 17th

century Japan. This makes translation a slow and difficult task. For example, one formula calls for "*bears paw*," however, this refers to an herb, not the foot of an animal.

LOCATION OF THE NINJA INFLUENCE (1600)

Location of Iga Clans (three groups), the Iga had over seventy sub-groups.

Location of the Koga Clans (fifty groups) in order of power. The Koga alone had over 200 sub-groups. Overall, the Koga controlled through their (fifty group) alliance over 1700 different sub-groups.

1. Koga

2. Bisen

3. Erazen

4. Haguro

5. Nakagana

6. Uesugi

7. Masuda

8. Kuroda

9. Fukushima

10. Kasuga

11. Kasaoka

12. Eiheiji / Matsuto

13. Yazawa

14. Aikawa

15. Fujiyoshida

16. Katsuura

17. Goshogawara

18. Fukaura

19. Eniwa

20. Embetsu

21. Urakawa

22. Wassamw

23. Wakayama

24. Kobayashi

25. Kaseda

26. Himeji

27. Ayabe / Fukuchiyama

28. Kariya

29. Ueda

30. Kakizaki

31. Tono

32. Miako

33. Misawa

34. Sakata

35. Ashikage

36. Katori

37. Takayama

38. Yazawa / Tokamachi

39. Murayama

40. Noto

41. Saijo

42. Hirata

43. Kurayoshi

44. Nichinan

45. Saito

46. Saiki

47. Yamaga

48. Tokushima

49. Shingu

50. Matsusaka

MASKS

Listed below are the various masks utilized by Koga

Ninja clans until the late 1800's. The majority of these mask's were carved out of wood. However, some masks were forged out of gold and pot metal. These masks were worn under the Ninja's hood so that, in close combat, should the black hood become unraveled the mask's hideous design would, conceal the Ninja's identity plus psychologically paralyze an enemy.

Many times, these masks were intentionally exposed in order to "freeze" a Ninja foe and seemingly add truth to the myth that Ninja were not men but "Oni" (devils) in disguise. This belief was continually reinforced by a blowgun hidden in the mouthpiece of the mask. Thus, one could with a single breath, spit death through poison needles.

Not to be overlooked is perhaps the greatest psychological trick employed by Ninja. Certain masks had hidden ducts filled with spiders, maggots and other hideous insects. A Ninja could release these creatures during battle and strike fear into the heart of any man as i.e., spiders would crawl out an opening in the mouth in contrast to a man, his mouth filled with saliva.

Mask's used by the various groups of Koga Yamabushi Ninjitsu:

1. Katori

2. Koga, Masuda, Kuroda, Himeji

3. Misawa

4. Bisen

5. Goshogawara

6. Uesugi, Eiheiji

7. Matsuto

8. Eiheiji

9. Hirata

10. Erazen

11. Kasaoka

12. Miyako

13. Fukaura

14. Aikaa

15. Yuzawa, Noto, Saijo, Miruvama

16. Sakata

17. Embetsu

18. Embetsu

19. Embetsu

20. Wassamu

21. Embetsu

22. Ueda

23. Saiki

24. Shingu

25. Avabe

26. Takayama

27. Eniwa

28. Wassamu

29. Haguro, Kasuga

30. Nakagaa, Fukushima, Yamaga, Tokushima, Shingu,
Matsusaka, Kasaoka.

31. Aikawa

32. Bisen

33. Kasuga

34. Kasuga

35. Fujiyoshida

36. Katsuura

37. Katori

ARROWHEADS, SHAKEN & SHURIKEN

Below is listed the various styled shuriken (throwing stars) and arrowheads utilized by the various Koga and Iga groups.

Some arrowheads served as a signature for one of the various Koga groups. These arrowheads have been grouped together regarding their specific ryu.

(Weapon Picture 'A')

1. All the different styled arrowheads employed by Ninja during the Edo Period (1603 - 1867)

(Weapon Picture 'B')

2. This photo reveals the various shuriken (throwing spikes) most favored by Ninja during the Muromachi Period (1492 - 1567)

(Weapon Picture 'C')

3. Sai jo arrowheads. were designed for medium ranges

(50-100 meters). (A) and (B) are anti-personnel while (C) was used sporadically against Samurai in heavy armor, but is, initially, designed to stop horses.

(Weapon Picture 'D')

4. This Yuzawa arrowhead was designed for short ranges (less than meters), with a stopping power capable of knocking a running horse off its feet.

(Weapon Picture 'E')

5. This Erazen arrowhead was designed to penetrate armor at close range.

(weapon Picture 'F')

6. This Katori arrowhead was designed for long range (100 or meters) and still penetrated body armor.

(Weapon Picture 'G')

7. This arrowhead was a favorite of all the different Koga groups, it was designed for long range flight and first employed by the Fukushima. Ninja legend has it that it was this styled arrowhead that killed Lord Takatora Toda, patron of the Iga clans. Toda was supposedly struck in the neck by an arrow shot over 150 meters away.

(Weapon Picture 'H')

8. Urakawa style arrowheads. Also favored by the Sai jo for medium range flight. Excellent for penetrating body armor of the time.

(weapon Picture 'I')

9. These styled arrowheads were favorite by the Sataka.

(weapon Picture 'IJ')

10. Ueda favorites. (A) and (B) was adopted by Ueda wen
fighting alongside various Koga groups under Nobunaga Oda
in 1581. (C) and (D) were used for long range.

(weapon Picture 'IK)

11. These arrowheads were favored by the Tono group that had, according to folk legend, fired three at Hideyoshi for a display of accuracy, pinning him to a post without ever striking his body.

(weapon Picture 'IL)

12. All of these arrowheads were used by the Bisen. The most notable and clearly identifiable as Bisen is (D). All these arrowheads were initially designed to stop horsemen.

(weapon Picture 'IM)

13. Iga shuriken, Fuiibayashi group.

(weapon Picture 'IN)

14. Embetsu shuriken. The legendary kind used to kill Ishikawa (the great highway robber of the Tokiado).
- 15) Eihei ji shuriken.
- 16) Masuda shuriken.
- 17) Bisen shuriken
- 18) Mamochi shuriken.
- 19) Erazen shuriken.
- 20) Erazen shuriken.
- 21) Haguro shuriken.
- 22) Nakagana shuriken;(This type would be hurled in bunches at horseman).
- 23) Matsuto shuriken.
- 24) Masuda & Hemeji shuriken
- 25) Kuroda shuriken.
26. Fukushima & Shingu shuriken.
27. Tokushima shuriken.
28. Matusaka shuriken, (this type was hurled by catapults, hundreds at a time).

29. asoa shurien.

30. asaoa shuriken.

31. Yawa, Joto shuriken.

32. Saio, Miruvama shuriken.

3. Aiawa, Saata, atcri, Hrata shuriken.

34. Masuda, Fuivoshida shaken (wheel blade).

35. Mivako, atsra shuriken, (sometimes fixed to a long pole.)

36. Gosho Qara, Faura shuriken. also employed in a larger version as an off-shoot of a jitte.

37. Embetsu shurken. (A tassal was usually attached)

38) Uraawa, Kazikai shuriken. (employed as in place of a tanto)

39) Wassamu, Tono shuiken.

40) Waavama shuriken.

41. Obavashi shuriken,(made so it can be easily thrown
from horseback).

42. Aseda, ariva shuriken.

GLOSSARY

Ainu -- Non-Asiatic people who inhabited the northern most island of Japan; whose political position was not unlike the American Indian.

Bakufu -- Public works projects headquartered in Edo (Tokyo) during the Tokuwawa family rein as Shogun.

Buddhist -- Religious doctrine based on the teachings of Buda.

Buke Sho Hatto -- Edict which forbade diamyos to build castles, or contact the Imperial court.

Bushido -- The Samurai's (warrior s) code of conduct.

Bo-jitsu -- Short and long staff combat skills.

Chi -- Earth element from the “*I Ching*” *Book of Changes*.
Internal strength in Chinese martial arts.

Chua Ka – Mongolian massage, similar to accupressure, to heal or kill. From which, the legendary Ninja “Death

Touch" is derived. Used by Ninja to numb their bodies.

Chunin - Ninja sub-group leaders responsible for training, discipline and ,when necessary, leading collective attacks.

Confucianism -- Chinese morality, concerned with the development of harmony through Man's realization of his social duties.

Diamyo -- Feudal lord who ruled their respective fiefs.

En-no-Gyo ja -- Buddhist priest who tried to restore order with Shugendo.

Fief -- Respective domain under the control of the diamyo.

Fu -- Wind element of the *I Ching*.

Jonin -- Ninja leader, allied to the various families under Prince Regent Shotoku. Responsible for policy and decision making

Ka -- Fire element of the *I Ching*.

Kagemusha -- "Shadow Warrior" name for ninja who served the Shogun and Shogunate as secret police.

Kamarai -- Another name used to describe Ninja.

Kamikazi -- Divine wind, which destroyed the Monol
invasion fleet before it could reach the shores of Japan.

Kata -- Set movements, like dance routines, practiced by
karteka (karate practitioners) to help their form.

Katana -- Long sword only to be worn by Samurai.

Kempei Tai -- The counter-intelligence organization set up
by Ninja for the Japanese Army's General staff in 1878.

Ken-jitsu -- *Ken*(blade) *jitsu*(battlefield skill) is defined as
sword combat.

Koga-Yamabushi -- Those families of Ninja who originated
from the Koga mountain region of Japan.

Kozuryo -- 5th Century kingdom now North Korea.

Kokuryukai -- “*Black Dragon Society*” who specialized in

spying without officially sanctioned government ties.

Ku -- Void element of the *I Ching*.

Kuji-kiri -- "Nine hands cutting" meditation exercise used by ninja in which one channels consciousness through finger weaving exercises.

Kumite -- (Sparring). Traditionally, full contact fighting without benefit of protection. Competitors are allowed to strangle, arm lock or hold an opponent while striking him. Victory is determined by knockout or submission ("*Matte*").

Kunochi -- Female "Ninja" operative.

Kusunoki-Ryu -- School of strategy and tactics, which emphasized spying and counter-intelligence.

Kyotseo Shogei -- A combination knife and sickle used by Ninja in the Edo era.

Kyu-jitsu -- Combat archery, done while standing, crouching, or on horseback.

Mandala -- Schematic pictorial renderings of the structure of the universe, used for the direction of concentration, used by Iga-Ninja.

Mantra -- Occult belief of power generation through charged words.

Meiji -- (Enlightened rule): A title taken by Emperor Matsuhito when empowered, in 1868.

Mikkyo -- A compendium of religious beliefs with foundations in the esoteric tantric lore of India, Tibet and China.

Mudra -- Energy-channeling hand postures.

Ninja -- "*NIN*" meaning (1) Spirit (to hide within) (2) Skill (3) The cutting edge of a blade. "*JA*" is a term of assignation, thus Ninja, means someone whose spirit and skill are as sharp as the cutting edge of a blade. Can also mean, human being, hiding.

Ninja No Chigiri -- Oath taken by initiates who are about to enter the ninja clans.

Nin-jitsu -- Koga name for their system. Translated: "It is the battle skill (Jitsu) of hiding within (NIN) or the art of stealth, the art of invisibility.

- Defined: "It is the way of the Ninja to answer before questioned, incorporating every practical form of martial science given that time in history.

Ninjutsu -- The Iga-Ninja name for their martial art system.

Omyodo -- Ancient science which includes astronomy, astrology, the Chinese art of divination and logic.

Onmitsu -- Another name used in place of Ninja.

Ping Fa -- "A Strategy for War", written by Chinese strategist Sun Tzu. The "blueprint" for Ninjitsu.

Ran'gaku -- Dutch learning.

Rappa -- Another name used to describe a Ninja operative.

Ronin -- Unemployed, masterless Samurai.

Ryu -- "Root" or "Way of" a particular clan or style of a martial art.

Sankim-Kotai -- Residency law.

Samurai -- (“To serve”) A warrior/bureaucrat member of the Japanese aristocracy.

Sensei -- Teacher

Shidoshi – “The four ways of the corpse.” In Koga Ninjitsu this is a very high rank whereas in Iga, it has a totally different meaning: “Teacher of enlightenment” and is of very low distinction – made up to help promote the system..

Shidoshi-Ho -- An almost honorary degree with little power or meaning in the Ninja arts.

Shihan -- Master grade practitioner.

Shimpan -- Twenty-three lords who were natural allies because of their kinship through birth relation to the Tokuawa line.

Shinobi -- In the Edo era, the name used to describe Ninja loyal to the Shogunate.

Shoheiko -- Confucian college. Suppa -- Another name used to describe a Ninja.

Shaken -- *Sha* (wheel) *Ken* (blade). Throwing stars dipped in poison by Ninja.

Shinto -- Religious doctrine of Japan.

Shogun -- Military dictator.

Shogunate -- Military body which ruled the country of Japan.

Shugendo -- Religious doctrine propagating Buddhism.

Shuriken -- Throwing spikes, sharpened on both ends,

dipped in poison by Ninja.

Shuriken-jitsu -- The combat skill of blade throwing.

Silla – 6th Century kingdom, now southeast Korea.

Soke -- Successor, one who is chosen to succeed after the death of the head of a particular Ninja clan or ryu.

Sui -- Water element of the *I Ching*.

Terakoya -- School for commoners, often attached to Buddhist temples.

Tokiado -- The main route of communication in feudal Japan.

Tozama -- The third category of lords who had submitted to the Tokugawa power only after 1600.

Wakazashi -- Short companion sword worn by Samurai.

Yamabushi – *Yama* (mountain) *Bushi* (warrior) culture from which Ninja are derived.

Yarijitsu -- *Yari* (spear) *Jitsu* (combat skill), the combat skill of spear fighting.

Yo'gaku -- Western learning.

Yoshitsune-ryu -- School of strategy and tactics, which emphasized the surprise attack, jumping and the introduction of poisons to Ninjitsu.

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